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Predigtstudie über Luk. 24, 1—12.

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Wie die andern Evangelisten, so erzählt auch Lukas die Begebenheiten, die auf die Auferstehung unsers Heilandes Bezug haben, mit ziemlicher Ausführlichkeit. Es erinnert dies daran, daß die Apostel, wenn sie das Evangelium predigten, mit großem Nachdruck gerade von der Auferstehung Jesu handelten, wie das aus ihren in der Apostelgeschichte berichteten Reden und aus ihren Briefen sattsam hervorgeht. Bekannt ist, daß die Evangelisten in ihrem Bericht über die Auferstehung des Herrn nicht alle ein und dieselben Einzelheiten erzählen. Doch bedeutet das wahrlich nicht, daß sie einander widersprechen. Die Evangelisten ergänzen vielmehr einander, und ihre vier Berichte zusammen genommen geben uns ein vollständiges Bild von den Vorgängen an jenem großen Morgen.

V. 1. Wie das μέν — δέ zeigt, hätte das neue Kapitel eigentlich anfangen sollen mit den Worten: „Und den Sabbat über waren sie“, nämlich die Kap. 23, 55 erwähnten Frauen, „stillen nach dem Geseß.“ Daran schließen sich nämlich ganz eng die Worte V. 1: „Und am ersten Tag der Woche, beim ersten Morgengrauen, kamen sie zu dem Grab, indem sie die Spezereien trugen, die sie bereitet hatten.“ Die Kardinalzahl (μία) wird hier, wie auch sonst häufig, im Sinn der Ordinalzahl gebraucht (wohl ein Hebraismus). Der Plural οἱ βαθέως bedeutet hier Woche. *Bathēos* ist nicht Adverb, wie V. Weiß behauptet, sondern Genitiv (vgl. Robertson, *Short Gr.*, S. 26). Bezeichnet wird hier durch ὅρθον βαθέως der Zeitpunkt, eine Ausdrucksweise, die allerdings vom klassischen Gebrauch abweicht, wie Blaß (§ 186) hervorhebt. Man hat behauptet, diese Stelle stehe in Widerspruch mit Mark. 16, 2, wo es heißt, daß die Frauen bei Sonnenaufgang zum Grabe kamen. Die Schwierigkeit hebt sich leicht, wenn man bedenkt, daß die Frauen eine Strecke Weges zurückzulegen hatten, und daß sie ihren Gang zum Grabe wohl beim Aufsteigen der Morgenröte begonnen haben mögen, während ihr Eintreffen in Josephs Garten stattfand, als die Sonne eben sichtbar wurde. Ihre Absicht war, das nun gründlich zu tun,

was man am Freitagabend (Joh. 19, 40) vorläufig nur flüchtig hatte tun können, nämlich Jesu Leichnam zu salben. Sie hatten sich verfehren mit ἀρώματα, fester Salbe, und mit μέρα, Salzböl (Luk. 23, 56), welch letzteres wohl unter den hier genannten Spezereien (ἀρώματα) mit einbegriffen ist. Was die Frauen zum Grabe trieb, war die innige Liebe zu Jesu. Sie sind es nun auch, denen zuerst die Osterbotschaft zuteil wird.

V. 2. 3. „Sie fanden den Stein abgewälzt von dem Grabe, und als sie hineingingen, fanden sie den Leib des Herrn Jesu nicht.“ Be- merkenswert ist hier, daß Lukas, obwohl er vorher mit keiner Silbe einen Stein erwähnt hatte, der vor das Grab gelegt worden sei, jetzt sagt, die Weiber fanden den Stein (man beachte den bestimmten Artikel) abgewälzt. Läßt dies nicht erkennen, daß ihm das Verschließen des Grabes durch einen großen Stein wohl bekannt war, wenn er es auch unterlassen hatte, bei der Erzählung der Beerdigung des Heilandes etwas davon zu sagen? Daraus, daß der eine Evangelist nicht alles erzählt, was der andere berichtet, dürfen wir also keineswegs schließen, daß sie nichts um die Dinge, die sie unerwähnt lassen, wußten. Wie das Abwälzen des Steines geschehen war, ist bei Matthäus zu lesen. Daß Maria Magdalena sofort zurückkehrte, um den Aposteln zu melden, das Grab sei offen, übergeht Lukas. In ganz schlichter, einfacher Weise erzählt er, die Frauen seien ins Grab gegangen und hätten den Leib Jesu nicht dort gefunden. Jesus war auferstanden. Das leere Grab war den ersten Christen ein beredter Zeuge dafür, daß die Auferstehung Jesu eine Tatsache sei. Freilich, absolute Gewißheit hierüber verschaffte dieser Umstand ja nicht: der Leib Jesu konnte durch Menschenhand entfernt worden sein. Zu beachten ist, daß keiner der Evangelisten den Vorgang der Auferstehung selbst schildert. Uns verlangt wohl, etwas zu wissen von den Engelsköpfen, die gewiß ein übermächtiges Halleluja anstimmten, als der Gottessohn sich den Armen des Todes entwand. Aber der Heilige Geist läßt nicht den Schleier, der über dem großen Ereignis selbst liegt. Die Frauen finden das Grab leer; die Engel verkündigen ihnen: Der Heiland lebt; der Gestorbene erscheint seinen Jüngern lebendig und verkehrt mit ihnen — damit hat sich unser Glaube zu begnügen und kann es, Gottlob! auch tun.

V. 4. „Und es geschah, während sie hierüber bestürzt waren, siehe, da traten zwei Männer zu ihnen in strahlendem Gewand.“ Das καὶ vor οὐδὲ ist ein Hebraismus, den wir im Deutschen nicht beibehalten können. Die Weiber waren bestürzt; so etwas hatten sie nicht erwartet. Es deutet dies darauf hin, daß die Jünger Jesu nichts mit der Entfernung seines Leibes zu tun hatten. Wenigstens die Frauen wußten nichts darum. Natürlich nicht; weshalb wären sie überhaupt zum Grab hinausgegangen, wenn sie von einem Plan, Jesu Leichnam hinwegzunehmen, Kenntnis gehabt hätten? Und plötzlich („siehe!“) hatten sie noch ein unerwartetes Erlebnis — Engel erschienen ihnen.

Daß die zwei Männer Engel waren, ist zur Genüge angezeigt durch die Aussage über ihr Gewand. Markus erwähnt nur einen Engel, behauptet aber, wohlgemerkt nicht, daß nur einer dagewesen sei.

V. 5—7. „Als sie voller Furcht waren und ihr Angesicht zur Erde neigten, sprachen sie [die Engel] zu ihnen: Warum suchet ihr den Lebenden unter den Toten? Er ist nicht hier, sondern er stand auf. Erinnert euch daran, wie er, als er noch in Galiläa war, zu euch redete und sagte, daß des Menschen Sohn müsse in die Hände sündiger Menschen übergeben und gekreuzigt werden und am dritten Tage auferstehen.“ Kein Wunder, daß die Frauen, als sie sich plötzlich Engelgestalten gegenüber sahen, Schrecken ergriff und sie in Furcht nicht aufzublicken wagten. So steht es bei uns seit dem Sündenfall: alles übernatürliche erweckt Angst in uns, erinnert uns an unsere Unreinigkeit und die verdiente Strafe. Doch nicht zum Gericht sind die Engel erschienen. Gleich verkündigen sie die frohe Osterbotschaft. Die Frage: „Warum“ usw. ist rhetorisch und hilft, die Meldung der Engel eindrucksvoll zu machen. Der Sinn ist: Jesus lebt; sucht ihn ferner nicht hier am Ort der Toten; er ist auferstanden! Jesus wird der Lebende (Part. Präf.) genannt; vgl. Offenb. 1, 18. Das ist das erste Wort, welches den frommen Frauen die Auferstehungskunde übermittelt. Sie dachten sich Jesus als tot. Nun meldet ihnen der Vorte Gottes, daß diese ihre Ansicht irrig sei. War Jesus denn überhaupt nicht gestorben? War sein Tod ein Scheintod gewesen? Den Gedanken weisen die Engel nachdrücklich ab. Er stand auf, sagen sie. Das setzt allerdings voraus, daß er im Tode gelegen hatte. Aber so gewiß sein Sterben stattgefunden hatte, so gewiß auch seine Auferstehung. Der Vorist (*ηγέρθη*) ist hier bezeichnend; er weist auf die Auferstehung als historisches Faktum hin. Es ist etwas geschehen, ein Ereignis hat stattgefunden; das liegt in der griechischen Form. Von der Bedeutung der Auferstehung sagen die Engel in diesem ersten Wort, V. 5, 6, noch nichts; sie beschränken sich darauf, die Auferstehung als Tatsache zu melden. Aber gerade auf großen Tatsachen, nicht auf Spekulationen oder weisen Gesetzen oder Regeln, beruht unser Heil, auf den Tatsachen der Geburt, des Lebens, des Leidens und Sterbens und des Auferstehens unsers Heilandes. Und wie die Apostel es taten, so wollen auch wir unsren Zuhörern vor allen Dingen Tatsachen verkündigen, vor sie hintreten und sprechen: Jesus ist auferstanden.

Wir sehen jedoch, daß die Boten Gottes es nicht unterließen, wenigstens in etwas auf die hohe Bedeutung des Osterereignisses hinzuweisen. Sie erinnern die Frauen an das, was Jesus selber seinen Jüngern über den Abschluß seiner sichtbaren Tätigkeit hier auf Erden gesagt hatte. Gedenket daran, wie, das heißt, in welchen Worten, mit welcher Bestimmtheit, er zu euch redete, als er noch in Galiläa war. Lukas selbst berichtet hiervon 9, 22. 44. Doch wird diese Vorherverkündigung nicht bloß ein paar Male erfolgt sein. Matthäus deutet

16, 21 an, daß Jesus in der letzten Zeit seines Erdenlebens dieses Stück zum Gegenstand seines Unterrichts mache: „Da fing Jesus an und zeigte seinen Jüngern“ usw. — Gehen wir nun näher auf V. 7 ein. Der Akkusativ *rör viðr* r. d. ist entweder Akk. des Bezugs, oder wir haben hier eine Wortvergnahme des Subjekts aus der folgenden Acc. c. inf.-Konstruktion. Der Sinn bleibt in jedem Fall natürlich derselbe. Auf Zweierlei ist zu achten. Einmal liegt in den Worten der Engel, daß Jesus sein Leiden und seine Auferstehung vorher verkündigt hatte, und zum andern, daß er diese Vorgänge als etwas bezeichnet hat, was geschehen müsse. Die Vorherverkündigung Jesu sein Leiden betreffend hatte sich nicht bloß in allgemeinen Ausdrücken bewegt. Wäre das der Fall gewesen, so brauchte man ihr vielleicht nicht einen übernatürlichen Charakter zuzuschreiben; denn daß es zwischen Jesu und den Führern der Juden zu einem ernsten Konflikt kommen und von ihnen der Versuch gemacht werden würde, ihn aus dem Wege zu räumen, das ließ sich wohl voraussehen, auch wenn man nicht die Gabe der Prophetie besaß. Nun hatte aber Jesus alle Einzelheiten angegeben und damit den Beweis geliefert, daß er ein Prophet Gottes sei. Die Engel nennen hier drei Stücke: die Übergabe in die Hände sündiger Menschen, das heißt, Verbrecher oder Heiden, die Kreuzigung und die Auferstehung am dritten Tage. Vgl. Luk. 18, 33 ff. War Jesus aber ein Prophet Gottes, so war ja seine ganze Botschaft wahr; dann war er wirklich Gottes Sohn und der Heiland, wie er gepredigt hatte. So liegt in diesen schlichten Worten eine tiefe Bedeutung. — Ein weiterer Gedanke, der den Weibern durch die Seele bliken mußte, als sie an die Prophezeiung Jesu erinnert wurden, war doch dieser: Jesus ist gewißlich auferstanden. Es mußte ihnen nun doppelt feststehen, daß hier kein Betrug vorliege, keine Täuschung; denn er hatte ihnen ja gerade seine Auferstehung vorausgesagt, sie ihnen im voraus gemeldet. Ja, Jesus hatte selbst schon im voraus die Engelsbotschaft bestätigt. Vor allen Dingen aber ist hier auf das „muß“ (*ðæt*) zu achten. Darin ist gleichsam die ganze herrliche Österbotschaft enthalten. Der Sinn ist doch dieser: Gott hat es bestimmt, daß dies geschehe. Es ist damit hingewiesen auf den Ratschluß der heiligen Dreieinigkeit, worin alle Teile des Werkes Jesu seit Ewigkeit festgesetzt waren. Vgl. 1 Petr. 1, 20. Nicht der blinde Zufall, nicht ein seltsames Geschick, sondern Gott selbst hat hier gewaltet. Und seine Bestimmung erstreckte sich nicht bloß auf Gethsemane und Golgatha, sondern auch auf den Triumph in Josephs Garten. Weil dies alles von Ewigkeit beschlossen war, war es auch schon längst in den Schriften des Alten Testaments geweissagt, wie Jesus das selbst so nachdrücklich betont. Vgl. besonders Luk. 24, 26. 27. 45—47. Doch warum hatte Gott schon in Ewigkeit die Auferstehung Jesu verordnet, und warum führte er sie denn auch hinaus? Es kann kein Zweifel darüber herrschen, daß sie aufs engste zusammenhängt mit unserm Heil. Hat Gott dies gewollt, so hat er damit auch etwas Großes ausrichten wollen. Dies erinnert uns an die herrlichen

Schriftaussagen über die Bedeutung der Auferstehung Jesu. Sie soll uns gewiß machen, daß unsere Erlösung eine Tatsache ist, 1 Kor. 15, 17—20. Sie ist die feierliche göttliche Erklärung, daß Christus uns Gerechtigkeit und Leben erworben hat, Röm. 4, 25. Mit Recht hat man sie das göttliche Amen zu dem Ruf Jesu: „Es ist vollbracht!“ genannt. Sie verbürgt uns unsere eigene Auferstehung zum ewigen Leben, 1 Kor. 15. So rechnen wir die Auferstehung Christi mit Recht zu den großen Taten Gottes, auf denen unsere Seligkeit beruht.

V. 8. „Und sie erinnerten sich seiner Worte und lehrten zurück von dem Grabe und verkündigten dies alles den Eltern und allen den übrigen.“ Jetzt kamen Jesu Worte den Frauen ins Gedächtnis zurück, Worte, an die sie am Karfreitag und am folgenden Sabbat, von Schmerz überwältigt, wohl gar nicht gedacht hatten. Sie eilten heim und brachten die frohe Kunde den elf Aposteln und den übrigen Jüngern, welch letztere wohl einen Teil der Apost. 1, 15 erwähnten Schar der Hundertundzwanzig ausgemacht haben. Lukas übergeht hier manches, was die andern Evangelisten berichten, besonders dies, daß Jesus der Maria Magdalena und den andern Frauen erschien. Aus seinem Schweigen aber den Schlüß ziehen zu wollen, daß er andeutet, jene Ereignisse hätten nicht stattgefunden, läßt sich auch vor dem Forum der Vernunft nicht halten.

V. 10. „Es waren Maria Magdalena und Johanna und Maria, die Mutter Jakobi; auch die übrigen mit ihnen sagten diese Dinge den Aposteln.“ Das *ai* vor *τοις*, das der textus receptus hat, ist nach den besten Handschriften zu streichen. Maria Magdalena wird in allen Auferstehungsberichten der Evangelisten, wo die Frauen erwähnt werden, an erster Stelle genannt. Sie hat hier eine Hauptrolle gespielt, weshalb sie denn auch die einzige ist, die Johannes in seinem Bericht namhaft macht. Johanna wird in der Schrift nur hier und Luk. 8, 3 genannt. In dem Namen Maria Jakobi kann der Genitiv an und für sich bezeichnen, daß die Maria Mutter, Schwester oder Frau des Jakobus war. (Vgl. Robertson, *Short Gr.*, S. 100.) Andere Schriftstellen zeigen uns, daß sie die Gattin des Alphäus, der auch Kleophas hieß, und die Mutter des Jakobus des Jüngeren war. Auf Grund von Joh. 19, 25 nimmt man gewöhnlich an, daß sie eine Schwester der Mutter Jesu war, in welchem Fall dann diese beiden Schwestern denselben Namen gehabt hätten. Daß in jüdischen Familien Geschwister öfters denselben Namen trugen, ist nachweisbar, und so darf man der gewöhnlichen Meinung hier ohne Bedenken zustimmen. Lukas gibt aber zu erkennen, daß noch mehr Frauen am Grabe gewesen sind als die drei genannten. Auf jeden Fall waren noch mehrere andere zugegen, denn er braucht den Plural. So versichert er uns, daß die wunderbaren Ereignisse am Grabe nicht auf dem Zeugnis einer Person, sondern auf dem einer ganzen Anzahl von Personen beruhen. Es verstand sich von selbst, daß die Frauen den Aposteln die frohe Auf-

erstehungskunde meldeten; sie hätten das gewiß auch ohne besonderen Auftrag (Mark. 16, 7) getan.

V. 11. „Und vor ihren [der Jünger] Augen schienen diese Worte wie leeres Geschwätz; und sie glaubten ihnen [den Weibern] nicht“ (Imperfektum der andauernden Handlung). Die Nachricht der Frauen wurde zunächst von den Aposteln angesehen, als entbehrte sie jedes Grundes, als sei sie völlig aus der Lust gegriffen ($\lambda\eta\gamma\omega\sigma$ = Unsinne, Possen). Und dabei blieben sie auch fürs erste. Das war ja allerdings ungerechtfertigter Unglaube. Und doch, wie können wir uns über diesen Skeptizismus freuen, der uns zeigt, daß die Apostel nicht ohne weiteres eine ihnen angenehme Kunde glaubten, sondern Gewißheit haben wollten, ehe sie zustimmen! Das macht uns der Auferstehung unsers Heilandes um so gewisser.

V. 12. „Und Petrus stand auf und lief zum Grabe. Und er bückt sich und sieht nur die leinenen Tücher. Und er ging fort zu seiner Wohnung und wunderte sich über das, was geschehen war.“ Der Vers fehlt in dem guten Codex Bezae und einigen andern Handschriften; doch braucht man nicht an seiner Echtheit zu zweifeln. Eine Einzelheit fügt Lukas durch Eingebung des Heiligen Geistes hinzu aus der großen Zahl der Dinge, die er noch hätte erzählen können. Johannes erzählt das hier Berichtete ausführlicher, indem er besonders auch angibt, daß Petrus in der Begleitung des Johannes selbst zum Grabe gegangen sei. Daß Lukas das übrigens sehr wohl wußte, daß Petrus das Grab nicht allein aufgesucht hatte, zeigt in schlagender Weise der Plural V. 24. $\Pi\varrho\delta\acute{\epsilon}\alpha\tau\acute{o}\nu$ saßt man wohl am besten als: zu seiner Wohnung, wegen Joh. 20, 10, wo der Ausdruck nichts anderes bedeuten kann als: zu ihrer Wohnung. An und für sich könnte die Bedeutung sein: bei sich selbst. Dann wäre der Sinn: er wunderte sich bei sich selbst, das heißt, in seinen Gedanken. Aus dem Bericht des Johannes geht hervor, daß Petrus gleich in der Morgenfrühe zum Grabe eilte, als Maria Magdalena meldete, der Stein sei abgewälzt. Damit steht unser Bericht nicht im Widerspruch. Lukas hält sich nicht an die Reihenfolge der Ereignisse, sondern verfährt summarisch und hebt dann zum Schluß noch hervor, daß auch Petrus an jenem ersten Ostermorgen prominent war. Am Grabe angekommen, bückte er sich zunächst und schaute in das Grab hinein; vgl. Joh. 20, 5, wo dies in bezug auf Johannes berichtet wird. Dies dauerte jedoch nur einen Augenblick; forsch trat er, wie wir aus Joh. 20 wissen, in das Grab selbst. Er sieht (das praes. hist. macht die Erzählung lebendig) die Grابتücher allein, das heißt, Jesu Leib war nicht dabei. Dies war ihm ein Beweis, daß Jesus nicht fortgetragen worden war. In dem Fall hätte man nämlich die Tücher mitgenommen. So geht er denn, der, wie wir aus Joh. 20 sehen, noch nicht von der Engelsbotschaft gehört hatte, in Verwunderung heim. Was mag wohl vorgefallen sein? heißt es in seinem Innern. Sich Jesu Weissagung vorzuhalten, lag ihm in der Stimmung, in der er sich befand, noch fern.

Wir haben hier eine Fülle von Gedanken für Österpredigten. Vor allem wird man betonen müssen, wenn man über diesen Text predigt, daß Jesu Auferstehung eine historische Tatsache ist. Das ist es offenbar, worauf es Lukas in seiner Schilderung ankommt. Sodann haben wir aber hier auch Anhalt, den Trost des Österereignisses hervorzuheften. Ich gebe mehrere mögliche Themata an. — Zwei große Wahrheiten die Auferstehung Jesu betreffend: 1. Sie ist wirklich geschehen; 2. sie macht uns der Erlösung gewiß. — Jesus lebt. Das ist 1. gewißlich wahr und 2. sehr tröstlich. — Weshalb ist die Auferstehung Jesu so gewiß? 1. Weil die Weiber und Petrus das Grab leer fanden; 2. weil die Umstände andeuten, daß Jesu Leib nicht betrügerischerweise entfernt worden war; 3. weil die Engel sie verkündigten; 4. weil Jesus selbst sie vorausgesagt hatte. — Jesu Wort: Des Menschen Sohn muß am dritten Tage auferstehen, ist 1. ein Wort, das ihn als Propheten und Gottes Sohn kennzeichnet, 2. ein Wort, das uns die Bedeutung der Auferstehung eröffnet. — Die Stellung der Jünger zur Engelsbotschaft war 1. ungerechtfertigt, muß uns jedoch 2. durch Gottes Fügung zum Trost gereichen. — Wie sollen wir uns zur Auferstehungsbotschaft stellen? 1. Sie dankbar glauben, 2. sie eifrig verkündigen. — Jesus ist der Lebende. Durch dieses Wort wird uns 1. seine Auferstehung bezeugt, 2. aber auch die Tatsache, daß er auch jetzt noch lebt.

A.

Confirmation Sermon on Rev. 2, 10.

“Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life,” thus Jesus, the risen and glorified Savior, addresses you to-day. He is standing invisibly here before you with arms of outstretched love and mercy. He knows your heart’s intention of publicly making profession of your faith in Him to-day and vowing allegiance to Him as your one and only Savior. Before His omniscient eye the whole span of your life is unfolded like an open book: He sees the temptations from within and without, the battles, the trials and afflictions that will assail you on life’s journey. His heart is filled with deepest solicitude for your spiritual welfare; and to encourage and assist you “to stand fast in the faith, to quit you like men, to be strong,” “to endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ” in life’s battles, He holds before you the glorious reward of the victor, the crown of life, and says,

“BE THOU FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH, AND I WILL GIVE THEE A CROWN OF LIFE.”

1.

“Be thou faithful unto death.” No greater grace, no greater blessing, no greater happiness, can be bestowed upon man here below than faithfulness. Faithfulness is victory. To be faithful means,

literally, to be full of faith, to be loyal to Jesus. Faithfulness unto death means to be full of faith in Jesus, to cling to Jesus, as the branches cling to the vine, until life's journey is finished and one's eyelids close in death's sleep.

And why should you be faithful to *Jesus*? Ah, you know! Has He not shed His life's blood for you? Has He not purchased, won, redeemed you from your greatest enemies, from sin, death, and the power of the devil, by His holy, precious blood and His innocent suffering and death? Has He not made you happy, blessed children of God, who know God, who know whence you come and whither you go, and the way that leads to the blessed home above? Is there another like *Him*? You know that He is the only Savior, the Savior sent by God Himself. In Him you have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of all your sins. You know: "Neither is there salvation in any other," etc. Ah, do you not owe it to Him, your God and Savior, to be faithful to Him?

What does faithfulness to Jesus imply? In the first place, to keep your hearts pure and clean. You know the sad, the deplorably sad, condition of the human heart. Although renewed by faith, it still is, and so remains until death, the seat of all iniquity. You know what Christ, the Searcher of hearts, says: "Out of the heart proceed," etc. That is the condition of my heart and your heart, the condition of every man's, woman's and child's heart. Sad, is it not? A repulsive, but only too true picture which Christ paints of us. Oh, would you, then, with such a heart, inclined toward all that is evil, remain faithful to Jesus, you must by diligent use of the sanctifying Word of God and by fervent prayer overcome and suppress the evil lusts and inclinations of your heart. You must fight and battle against them lest they come out of the heart and seduce you into disbelief, despair, and other great shame and vice. You must strive with might and main, with all the grace which the Holy Ghost supplies, to rid your heart of all evil thoughts and desires and to fill it with holy, clean, pure, noble thoughts and desires. You must, as the man of God admonishes you, "delight yourselves in the Lord." Would you be successful in this battle against self, would you remain faithful to Jesus, then let your daily prayer be the prayer of David, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." This battle against self, against the evil thoughts and desires of the heart, must be a continual battle. There dare be no let-up, no easing-up, no negligence, no weariness, in this battle. The crown of life is at stake. St. Paul says: "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh," etc.

Faithfulness to Jesus, however, implies not only watchfulness over self, but also watchfulness over one's surroundings, one's environments. Temptation to sin, to become unfaithful to Jesus, assails

us not only from within, but also from without. Think of Joseph. You know the story of the great temptation which came over him. While busily at work, performing his duties as overseer of Potiphar's house, temptation in the form of a woman approached him. But he was victorious, he remained true to his God; because he had exercised watchfulness he could say, "How, then, can I do," etc.

Would you, then, be faithful to Jesus, you must watch over your surroundings, your environments. You must be careful of the friends you choose, the books you read, the company you keep, the places where you go, the pictures you see. Your friends, your books, your pleasures, and your amusements will have either a good or a bad influence over you; they will mold your character for better or for worse and shape your future life. Would you be faithful to Jesus, then let only such be your friends as are the friends of Jesus; read only such books as are truly edifying; go only to such places to which you can take Jesus with you and where Jesus will be a most welcome Guest.

And should temptations come upon you,—and they will,—then prove yourself a true soldier of Jesus Christ. Be not ashamed of Him; do not deny Him who bought you at so dear a price. If your friends, your associates in school or business, your playmates, entice you to sin, then remember God's word to each of you: "If sinners entice thee, consent thou not," but rather persuade you them, with all the strength that is in you, to follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, and meekness. By the power of the Cross withstand evil. Be faithful to Jesus and by faithfulness lead others to Jesus.

"Be thou faithful unto death." My dear children, and also you, my dear adults, let me emphasize as strongly as I possibly can that you will not and cannot remain faithful to Jesus by relying upon your own strength. Think of Peter. Boastfully relying on his own strength, he said to Jesus: "If I should die with Thee, I will not deny Thee in any wise." And what happened? Did he go into death with Jesus? Ah, no! Before a flippant servant girl's tongue he became a coward and denied His Jesus, not once, but thrice. You will do well to think often of Peter's self-confidence and denial and look for strength from above to be faithful to Jesus. Be diligent in the use of the means of grace. Never, not even for one Sunday, remain away from the house of God unless God Himself excuses you on account of illness or necessary works of charity. Remember, Jesus says: "He that is of God heareth God's words." Hear the Word and read the Word—remember, Jesus says: "Search the Scriptures"—and let the Word exercise upon your hearts its sanctifying power. Frequently come to the Lord's Table for the purpose of strengthening your faith in the forgiveness of all your sins through the blood of Jesus and of obtaining God's own strength

to go on from victory to victory. Daily examine yourselves according to the mirror of the divine Law; daily confess your sins to God Almighty, the merciful Father; daily ask for forgiveness for the sake of Him who was made sin for you; daily invoke the strength of God's Holy Spirit to overcome Satan, the world, and your flesh and to walk in godliness and good works. Thus, diligently using the means of grace and prayer, Jesus Himself will make you faithful unto death. For He says: "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me . . . life."

2.

Eternal life, or, as the text expresses it, "*the crown of life*," — it is the same thing, — that is the victor's reward, the great, blessed reward Jesus promises you if you remain faithful to Him unto death.

Eternal life! Would to God that I could fully picture this reward to you! Then, I know, no other thought would enter your mind than to obtain it; then the great master passion of your life would be *Jesus*. But I cannot; no mortal can. For "eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for them that love Him." I can give you only an incomplete picture of eternal life, tell you only as much as the Scriptures tell us. St. Paul says: "Now we see through a glass, darkly, but then *face to face*." St. John says: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; *for we shall see Him as He is.*" "We shall see Him face to face," "We shall see Him as He is," — children, this is eternal life! Then we shall be ever with the Lord, united with Him throughout all eternity. We shall see Him in whom we now believe, see Him as He is, know Him, the Triune God, according to His incomprehensible essence and all His wonderful attributes, and forevermore praise and bless the Lamb that was slain for us and made it possible for poor sinners to obtain so great salvation. There "God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away." There, "in His presence, is fulness of joy; at His right hand there are pleasures forevermore." — Ah, must not these glowing descriptions of life eternal, of heaven, move your hearts to sigh: "Jerusalem, thou city fair and high, would God I were in thee!"?

Oh, then, "Be thou faithful, and I will give thee a crown of life."

O sweet and blessed country,
The home of God's elect!
O sweet and blessed country
That eager hearts expect!

Jesus, in mercy bring us
To that dear land of rest;
Who art, with God the Father
And Spirit, ever blest.

And now, in conclusion, but a word or two to you, the members of Bethlehem, to the relatives and friends of these children and adults presented here for confirmation, to all of you assembled here in the house of God. This day must remind you of the day of your confirmation, when Jesus, with all His constraining love, said also to you, "Be faithful," etc. Have you been faithful? Have you been faithful in the use of the means of grace? Do you truly love the Word, and are you to be found regularly where it is proclaimed? When have you communed last? Have you been faithful in prayer? Have you been faithful in earnestly striving to gain the victory over self, Satan, and the world? If so, the gracious promise of your Savior still holds good: "I will give thee a crown of life." Let this promise, this glorious reward, spur you on until the crown is won!

Or have you been unfaithful? Have you broken your baptismal and confirmation vow? The Savior again this morning pleads with you, "Be thou faithful!" Oh, return, return, to the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls! Kneel contritely at the foot of His cross upon which He shed His life's blood for you, make a full confession of your unfaithfulness, and receive the forgiveness which He longs to grant. Then no longer forsake the house of your God and show your gratitude for sins forgiven by living unto Him and serving Him. Let your prayer be:—

My God, accept my heart this day
And make it always Thine
That I no more from Thee may stray,
No more from Thee decline.

And are there, perhaps, such in our midst this morning as until now have known nothing of the sweetness of salvation in Christ, in whom, however, through the Word preached this morning, has been awakened a desire to learn more of Jesus, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of all our sins? Let them avail themselves of the ministrations of this church, which, through its pastor,

Loves to tell the story
Of unseen things above,
Of Jesus and His glory,
Of Jesus and His love.

We love to tell the story
Because we know 'tis true;
It satisfies our longings
As nothing else can do.

"Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life,—may these words of Jesus strengthen you children of God on life's journey! May they cause all wanderers to return! May they fill the hearts of all who know not Jesus and His redeeming love with an ardent desire to say, "We would see Jesus," and to learn of Jesus to their souls' salvation! Amen.

Dispositionen über die neue epistolische Perikopenreihe der Synodalkonferenz.

Palmsonntag.

Phil. 2, 12—18.

Paulus war im Gefängnis, als er dieses schrieb. Wohl hatte er Sehnsucht, seine ehemaligen Gemeindeglieder wiederzusehen, aber was ihn selbst betrifft, war er ohne Sorge. Keine Klage und kein Murren wider Gott. Freude, daß er um Christi willen sein Leben darlegen darf, V. 17. Freude, daß seine Arbeit nicht vergeblich gewesen ist, V. 16, daß seine Gemeindeglieder, die weiland Finsternis waren, nun als Lichter in der Welt scheinen, V. 15. Und ihr sollt euch auch freuen, V. 18, daß Gott durch ihn so Großes ausgerichtet hat. — Nur eine Sorge hat er im Gefängnis: die Sorge um ihre Seligkeit, daß sie möchten standhaft bleiben und dem Evangelium gemäß würdiglich wandeln. Darum ermahnt er sie:

„Schaffet, daß ihr selig werdet, mit Furcht und Zittern!“

Wir sehen:

1. was sie schaffen sollen;
2. wie sie ihre Seligkeit schaffen sollen;
3. welchen Trost sie dabei haben.

1.

Was sollen wir schaffen? „Schaffet, daß ihr selig werdet!“ Die Seligkeit ist das höchste, herrlichste Kleinod. Was ist Seligkeit? Die Menschen sind voll Sünde und Unreinigkeit. Aus diesem Schlamm der Sünde herausgezogen werden, das ist Seligkeit. Die Menschen sind verschuldet, bankrott. Die Schuld ist groß bis an den Himmel. Von dieser Sündenschuld, die schier zu Boden drückt, befreit werden, das ist Seligkeit. Die Menschen sind Sklaven und Knechte der Sünde. Von diesen Ketten, Banden und Stricken der Sündenherrschaft befreit werden, das ist Seligkeit. Auf den Menschen ruht Gottes Zorn und Verdammnis. Mit Gott wieder versöhnt und von der Verdammnis erlöst werden, das ist Seligkeit. Die Seligkeit, die der Christ schon hier auf Erden zu genießen anfängt, geht endlich über in das ewige Leben. Beschreibung der Seligkeit: himmlischer Friede, unaussprechliche Freude, selige Ruhe, Schauen Gottes usw. Ist nicht die Seligkeit das herrlichste Kleinod?

Wie hoch hat Gott die Seligkeit der Menschen geachtet: Der Vater hat seinen eingebornen Sohn, sein Liebstes und Bestes, geopfert um der Seligkeit der Menschen willen. Der Sohn hat sein Blut vergossen, sein Leben gelassen, um die Menschen selig zu machen. Der Heilige Geist arbeitet fort und fort an den Herzen der Menschen, um Menschen zum Glauben zu bringen. — Die Engel freuen sich über einen

Sünder, der Buße tut. Mancher Christ betet fleißig für seine und anderer Menschen Seligkeit, bringt oft große Opfer (Märthertod) und läßt es sich etwas kosten, Menschen zur Seligkeit zu führen. Satan weiß, was für ein großes Gut die Seligkeit ist. Darum geht er umher wie ein brüllender Löwe, um Menschen um ihre Seligkeit zu betrügen. Selbst die Verdammten in der Hölle, die die Seligkeit einst verachteten, sehen jetzt alles mit andern Augen an und würden sich glücklich schähen, wenn nur ein Tröpflein der himmlischen Seligkeit in ihr Leid und Weh hineinflösse. Es ist mir, als ob alles in der Welt: Gott, Engel, Teufel, Menschen, euch zuriesen: „Schaffet, daß ihr selig werdet!“

Ihr haltet Gesundheit für ein hohes Gut; aber was nützt ein gesunder Leib, wenn die Seele verloren geht? Matth. 5, 29. 30. Reichtum wird von vielen hochgeachtet; aber was hilft es einem Menschen, so er die ganze Welt gewonne und nähme doch Schaden an seiner Seele? Ehre und Ansehen vor Menschen gilt viel bei manchen; aber was hilft es, wenn man von dem Vater im Himmel nicht geehrt wird, Joh. 12, 26, und endlich hören muß: „Geht hin, ihr Verfluchten“ usw.? Bringt die ganze Welt herbei und legt sie in eine Wagschale — nichts, nichts kann die Seligkeit aufwiegen.

Und das Schaffen deiner Seligkeit ist ganz deine eigene Sache. „Schaffet, daß ihr selig werdet!“ Deine eigene, persönliche Angelegenheit. Niemand kann sagen: „Das ist meine Sache nicht.“ Die Sünde, die du tust, ist deine Sünde und steht in Gottes Schuldbuch als deine Schuld verzeichnet. Für diese Sünde mußt du Vergebung haben. Niemand anders kann für dich in Christi Blut gewaschen werden, kein anderer für dich glauben. Wir können viel für dich tun, für dich beten usw., aber niemand kann seinen Bruder erlösen. So ist es mit dem Tod. Niemand kann für dich sterben. Durch diese enge Pforte mußt du selbst, und zwar allein, gehen. Niemand kann am Jüngsten Tage an deiner Statt vor Gottes Thron stehen. So ist es mit der Seligkeit. Wirst du selig, dann wird niemand anders deine Ehrenkrone tragen. Du selbst wirst deine Seligkeit genießen und kein Fremder. Gehst du verloren, dann ist Qual, Pein und Schmerzen alles dein eigen. Niemand anders kann dann den Zorn Gottes für dich tragen. Es ist recht, wenn ihr anderer Leute Seligkeit schafft (Mission), wenn ihr die Seligkeit eurer Kinder schafft (lieber etwas am Munde absparen, damit die Kinder christlichen Schulunterricht genießen können); aber vor allem schaffe deine eigene Seligkeit.

2.

Wie schafft man seine Seligkeit? Wenn der Apostel hier zu Ungläubigen redete, würde er etwas anders geredet haben, als er tut; er würde etwa sagen: „Glaube an den Herrn Jesum Christum, so wirst du und dein Haus selig.“ Nehmt eure Zuflucht allein zu der Gnade Gottes in Christo, der euer Leben vom Verderben

errettet, durch Leiden und Sterben euch erlöst hat. Er hat die Seligkeit geschafft. Glaubt an ihn!

Aber der Apostel redet hier zu Christen. V. 12: „Wie ihr allezeit seid gehorsam gewesen.“ Auch Christen, die schon im Glauben stehen und selig sind, müssen ihre Seligkeit schaffen. Wie? V. 16: „Haltet ob dem Wort des Lebens“ (fleißiger Gebrauch der Gnadenmittel) und V. 14. 15: „dass ihr seid ohne Tadel und lauter und Gottes Kinder, unsträflich mitten unter dem unschuldigen und verkehrten Geschlecht“ (gottseliger Wandel). Das sollen sie tun, damit sie die Seligkeit, die sie haben, nicht wieder verlieren. Der Mensch kann eine Blume nicht wachsen lassen, aber er kann die Blume, die Gott geschaffen hat, zerstören. Er kann sich selbst nicht das Leben geben, sich aber das Leben nehmen. So im Geistlichen. Er kann nicht aus eigener Kraft glauben und zu Christo kommen, kann aber am Glauben wieder Schiffbruch leiden.

Der Apostel hatte seine Gemeindeglieder ermahnt, dass sie demütig sein sollten und nichts tun durch Zank oder eitle Ehre, V. 3. Hoffart, Überhebung, Zank und Uneinigkeit haben ihren Ursprung darin, dass man anhebt, in der Sorge um die Seligkeit sicher und gleichgültig zu werden. So werden die Christen von vielen Gefahren bedroht, sicher zu werden und in den geistlichen Tod zurückzufinden.

Darum: fleißiger Gebrauch der Gnadenmittel. Haltet ob dem Wort des Lebens. Wer Gottes Wort und Sakramente gering schätzt, nicht mehr fleißig gebraucht, steht in Gefahr, geistlich zu hungern. Die Lampe erlischt, wenn nicht Öl aufgegossen wird. Drehe den elektrischen Strom ab, und es wird finster. Darum lest die Bibel zu Hause, kommt fleißig zur Kirche, hört Gottes Wort mit heilsbegierigem Herzen. Seid nicht träge im Gebet.

Christlicher Wandel, als Kinder Gottes, V. 15. Durch Leben in Sünden, durch mutwillige Sünden, begeht der Christ geistlichen Selbstmord. Darum: unsträflich mitten unter dem unschuldigen Geschlecht. Warnung vor Liebe zum Fleischlichen. Habt nicht lieb die Welt! Werdet nicht hineingeflochten in Sorge, Reichtum und Wollust dieses Lebens! Überwindet die Welt! Kämpft gegen die Versuchungen Satans! Kämpft den guten Kampf des Glaubens! Kreuzigt euer Fleisch! Enthaltet euch von Lüsten, die wider die Seele streiten! Jaget nach der Heiligung!

Mit Furcht und Bittern. V. 12. Wer sich lässt dünken usw. Du stehst im Glauben. Sei nicht stolz, sondern fürchte dich. Dienet dem Herrn mit Furcht, freuet euch mit Bittern. Überhebt euch nicht, als ob ihr es schon ergriffen hättest. Der Erste kann der Letzte werden. — Damit will der Apostel die Christen nicht ihrer Seligkeit ungewiss machen. Manche schliefen aus diesen Worten, dass kein Christ in diesem Leben der Gnade Gottes und Seligkeit gewiss sein könne, sondern vielmehr in Furcht und Zweifel sein müsse. Gerade das Gegenteil. Neben

der knechtischen Furcht vor Verlust der Seligkeit kann freilich das Vertrauen zu Gott nicht bestehen, wohl aber bei dem kindlichen Geist, der ehrfurchtsvoll zu Gott emporblickt und sich hütet, Gott zu beleidigen. Diese kindliche Furcht ist stets mit Glaubensfreudigkeit und Gewissheit der Seligkeit verbunden. Derselbe Apostel sagt: „Ich bin gewiß“ usw., Röm. 8, 38. 39.

3.

Welchen Trost haben wir dabei? So dringend der Apostel die Christen ermahnt, ihre Seligkeit mit Furcht und Zittern zu schaffen, so herrlich ermuntert und stärkt er sie in der Gewissheit der Seligkeit. V. 12: „Denn Gott ist's, der in euch wirkt“ usw. Gott hat unsere Seligmachung ganz in seine Hände genommen. Aus den Worten: „Schaffet, daß ihr selig werdet!“ schließen manche wohl, daß der Mensch aus eigener Kraft seine Bekehrung und Seligkeit schaffen oder wenigstens dazu beitragen müsse; aber nein: „So liegt es nun nicht an jemandes Wollen oder Laufen“ usw. Daß die Christen zum Glauben gekommen sind, ist allein Gottes Werk. Er wirkt das Wollen. Auch die Erhaltung im Glauben verdankt der Christ ganz der Gnade Gottes. Er wirkt das Vollbringen. Würde ein Farmer seine Hände von seiner Farm abziehen, so ginge alles in Unkraut auf. Wenn Gott jetzt von uns Christen seine Hände abziehen würde, so wäre mit einem Schlag alles geistliche Leben erloschen. Kein gläubiges Gebet würde mehr zu Gott emporsteigen, kein gutes Werk mehr geschehen, und wenn wir auch aus alter Gewohnheit noch ins Gotteshaus gingen und die alten Lieder sägten, wären wir doch nur ein tönend Erz. Gott muß das Vollbringen wirken.

Ein Christ fragt sich mitunter: Werde ich beharren? Wie viele Versuchungen umgeben mich! Wie viele sind gefallen! Alle diese Gedanken schlägt der Apostel nieder: Gott wirkt das Vollbringen. „Der in euch angefangen hat das gute Werk“ usw., Phil. 1, 6. „Fürchte dich nicht“ usw., Jes. 41, 10. Genügen dir nicht diese Verheißenungen deines Gottes? Hat er dich jemals im Stich gelassen? Wenn du strauchelst, wird er dich wieder aufrichten. Menschen mögen etwas anfangen und nicht vollenden, aber sollte er etwas sagen und nicht tun?

Was bewegt Gott, dies alles an dir zu tun? Nichts in uns, nicht unsere Würdigkeit, sondern sein Erbarmen, sein Wohlgefallen, V. 12.

Nun denn: „Schaffet, daß ihr selig werdet!“

G. G.

Zweiter Ostertag.

1 Kor. 15, 50—58.

Wie kein anderes Fest richtet Ostern unsern Blick auf jene Welt. Es ist das Fest der Auferstehung, das Fest der Unsterblichkeit. Daß es so etwas gibt wie Auferstehung und Verklärung, predigt laut das offene, leere Grab in Josephs Garten. Er, der tot war, ist nicht mehr im

Grabe; er ist auferstanden. Das hatte nicht nur für ihn etwas zu bedeuten, sondern auch für uns; vgl. V. 20. 23: „Erftling“. Wie es um jene Welt bestellt ist, was Auferstehung, Verklärung, Unsterblichkeit ist, davon haben wir aus uns selbst keinen rechten Begriff. Was Menschen aus eigener Weisheit reden von jener Welt, von Ewigkeit, Unsterblichkeit usw., hat keinen Zusammenhang mit dem, was geschehen soll und wird. Diese Dinge liegen über unsere menschliche Weisheit, unser Begreifen und Verstehen hinaus. Hier kann nur der Heilige Geist recht belehren. Das geschieht im 15. Kapitel dieses Briefes. Unser Text ist der Schlussakkord eines herrlichen Triumphgesanges, von Gott eingegeben. Was hier steht, ist buchstäblich wahr, ist zuverlässige Offenbarung. Wir betrachten:

Die wundervolle Österoffenbarung von unserer Auferstehung.

1. Sie verkündet uns eine wunderbar herrliche Verwandlung.
2. Sie verheißt uns einen großen vollkommenen Sieg.
3. Sie übt einen gewaltigen Einfluß aus auf unser Leben.

1.

a. Seit Christus auferstanden ist, warten die Christen eines neuen Himmels, einer neuen Erde. Darüber war man sich auch wohl in Korinth einig. Aber viele mochten nicht an die Auferstehung ihres Leibes glauben. Mit vielen Worten hat der Apostel die Lehre von der Auferstehung des Fleisches dargelegt. Es muß eine Auferstehung geben. Alles Reden von jener Welt, vom ewigen Leben, hat keinen Sinn ohne die Auferstehung. Was ist das für ein Leben, wobei der Leib im Grabe modert? Es muß auch eine Veränderung mit uns vor sich gehen. Denn „Fleisch und Blut können das Reich Gottes nicht ererben“. Der sündige, nichtige, sterbliche, verwestliche Leib, wie wir ihn kennen, kann das herrliche Erbe jener Welt nicht antreten.

b. Diese Verwandlung erfolgt in der Auferstehung, V. 52. Das Verwestliche wird anziehen das Unverwestliche usw. Das Alte wird nicht bloß bedeckt, sondern abgelegt. Das Neue wird angezogen. Die Auferstehung versetzt die Gläubigen in einen neuen Stand, der mit dem alten nichts mehr zu schaffen hat.

c. Diese Verwandlung wird auch denen zuteil, die dann noch leben. Gläubige sind gemeint V. 50 („liebe Brüder“). Sobald die letzte Posaune erklingt, kommen von allen Ecken und Enden entschlafene Christen mit verklärten, unverwestlichen Leibern aus den Gräbern hervor. In demselben Augenblick treten die noch Lebenden in den Stand der Verklärung ein und gesellen sich ihnen zu, 1 Thess. 4, 17. Welch ein wundervoll herrlicher Augenblick! Der arme, fieche, von der Sünde zer-

rüttete, sterbliche, verwesliche Leib gehört der Vergangenheit an. Er ist verwandelt, verklärt, unsterblich. Das ist Gottes Österoffenbarung an uns. — Wer wird den Tod nun noch fürchten? Ein großer Sieg ist uns verheißen.

2.

a. „Der Tod ist verschlungen in den Sieg.“ Das ist die Österbotschaft. Wir wissen, was das jetzt schon für uns bedeutet. Seit Christus auferstanden ist, hat der Tod seine eigentliche Macht, seinen Stachel, verloren. Christus hat gesiegt über die Sünde. „Er ist um unserer Gerechtigkeit willen auferweckt.“ Die Sünde ist gebüßt, die Schuld bezahlt, die Strafe getragen, die Macht der Hölle gebrochen; sie kann ihre Opfer nicht mehr auf ewig verschlingen. Der Ankläger der Sünder, der Teufel, ist verworfen. Unserm Sterben ist der Schrecken genommen. Das beweist Christi Auferstehung. Dessen freuen wir uns im Glauben.

b. Hier ist von einem Sieg die Rede, der dann zur Geltung kommt, wenn wir auferstehen. Bis zum großen Auferstehungstag herrscht gewissermaßen noch der Tod. Er legt alle Menschen danieder. Er füllt die Welt an mit Gräbern. Wir wandeln auf dem Staube gefallener Geschlechter. Auch für den, der im Glauben stirbt, hat der Tod noch etwas Majestatisches, Kraftvolles an sich. Die natürlichen Kräfte und Fähigkeiten des Menschen gehen im Tode unter. Das wird einmal aufhören, dann, wenn dies Verwesliche wird anziehen das Unverwesliche; dann wird der Tod nicht mehr sein, Offenb. 21, 4. Für den auferweckten Gläubigen ist der Tod nicht mehr vorhanden. Welch großartige Verheizung! Wir an den Tod gewöhnten Menschen sollen es erleben, daß es keinen Tod mehr gibt.

c. Das wird sich ganz gewiß erfüllen. Der Apostel beruft sich auf die Schrift. Das ist nicht ein schöner Gedanke, den sich die Gläubigen machen. Der Sieg über den Tod beruht nicht auf ihrer Einbildung, sondern das steht geschrieben. So gewiß Gottes Wort wahr ist, so gewiß erfolgt das große Siegesfest in unserer Auferstehung mit verklärten Leibern.

d. Der Apostel weist auf den Ursprung des Sieges hin. „Durch Jesum Christ“, V. 57. Christus hat Tod und Hölle besiegt. Das offene Grab beweist das. Diesen Sieg hat Gott uns gegeben, zugesprochen. Das ist Gottes Absicht: den Sieg sollen die Menschen haben, ihnen kommt er zugut. Darum ist Östern solch ein großes Dank- und Jubelfest; der letzte Feind der Menschen, der Tod, ist dahin. Das muß ja Einfluß haben auf unser Leben.

3.

a. V. 58. Um Hinblick auf den Sieg, den wir haben, den wir in unserer Auferstehung feiern werden, auf die Verklärung, die uns so gewiß ist, „seid feste“! Die besieгten Feinde, Sünde, Tod, Teufel, regen sich noch; sie wollen uns im Verein mit der Welt den Sieg rauben,

den Osterrost nehmen, die zukünftige Verklärung ungewiß machen. Kann man uns nicht zu Zweifel bewegen, so sucht man uns zum Sündendienst zu locken, damit wir so des Sieges verlustig gehen. Österchristen müssen fest und unbeweglich sein. Sie sind es auch, solange sie die Österbotschaft: „Der Tod ist verschlungen in den Sieg!“ festhalten.

b. „Nehmet immer zu“ usw. Der, dem die Gläubigen ihren Sieg verdanken, hat sein Werk auf Erden. Er lässt seinen Sieg verkündigen. Die Menschen sollen desselben teilhaftig werden. Dazu gebraucht er erlöste, befreite, todesmutige, siegesfreudige Arbeiter. Wie könnten sie faul, schlafbrig sein, wenn es gilt, dessen Werk zu treiben, dem sie einen solchen Sieg verdanken? Österchristen, die sich ihres Sieges freuen, werden Gutes tun und nicht müde werden, werden mildtätig, freigebig, eifrig, opferfreudig sein, zumal da die Arbeit nicht vergeblich ist. Seit Christi Auferstehung hat es mit unserm Wirken auf Erden eine andere Bevandtnis als vorher. Was man sonst auf Erden erringen kann, ist vergeblich. Geld und Gut, Ehre und Ansehen, Genuss und Bequemlichkeit, was nützt es? Jeder Tag, der mit Ringen um diese Dinge hingebbracht wird, bringt uns nur einen Schritt dem Tode näher, der alles verschlingt. Ganz anders die Arbeit in dem Herrn. Sie ist auch anstrengend, aufreibend, aber nicht vergeblich. Sie gefällt dem Auferstandenen, hat einen Gnadenlohn und kommt erlösten Mitmenschen zugut. Sie kann nur dazu dienen, in uns die Erinnerung wachzuhalten, welchem Ziel wir zustreben. Die Arbeit beschäftigt sich ja mit den Sachen dessen, „der uns den Sieg gegeben hat“. Ja: Phil. 3, 20. 21. Halleluja!

J. C. M.

Sonntag Quasimodogeniti.

Eph. 2, 11—18.

Wir Menschen wissen oft nicht, wann es uns wohlgeht. Wir erkennen so leicht die Wohltaten, die Gott uns im Leiblichen täglich und reichlich beschert. Aber wie wenig wissen wir die geistlichen Güter und Wohltaten des harmherzigen Gottes zu schätzen! Es ist doch wahrellich etwas Großes, daß Gott uns zu Christen gemacht hat, Kol. 1, 12—14; Eph. 2, 1—10. Welche Wohltat und Gnade Gott uns dadurch erwiesen hat, sollte stets uns in Erinnerung bleiben, und dafür sollten wir täglich Gott von Herzen danken. Zu dem Ende gibt uns Paulus

Eine heilsame Erinnerung

1. an unser früheres Elend,
2. an unsern jetzigen seligen Zustand.

1.

V. 11. 12. Es bestand zwischen Heiden und Juden ein äußerer Unterschied. Die Heiden waren unbeschritten und wurden deshalb von den Juden verächtlich die Vorhaut genannt. Doch deshalb waren die

Juden um nichts besser als die Heiden. Paulus redet verächtlich von der Beschneidung nach dem Fleisch, die mit der Hand geschieht. Denn die meisten Juden pochten und trockten darauf als auf ein äußerliches Ding und einen äußerlichen Vorzug und fragten nichts nach der Bedeutung der Beschneidung als eines Zeichens und Siegels des Bundes Gottes. Für sie hatte die Beschneidung keinen religiösen Wert. Und im Neuen Testament war ja auch die Taufe an die Stelle der Beschneidung getreten. Somit bedeutete die Beschneidung keinen tiefgehenden Unterschied zwischen Juden und Heiden.

Aber ein tiefer, bedeutsamer Unterschied bestand zwischen dem wahren Israel und den Heiden. Zu der Zeit, als die Heiden noch ohne Christum waren, durch den Unglauben völlig von Christo getrennt, da waren sie auch ausgeschlossen von dem Gottesstaat, dem wahren Israel, vom Reiche Gottes. Da waren sie nicht nur nach dem Fleisch keine Kinder Abrahams, sondern auch geistlicherweise nicht Abrahams Same, Gal. 3, 1—14. Sie waren Fremdlinge, ohne Bürgerrecht in Gottes Reich. Damit waren sie auch fremde von den Testamenten der Verheißung. Denn das wahre Israel war die Gemeinde des Heils; Israel waren die Heilsgüter vertraut. Mit Israel hatte Gott seinen Gnadenbund aufgerichtet und denselben wiederholt bestätigt, und dieser Bund beschloß in sich die Verheißungen von Christo und seinem Heil. So entbehrten die Heiden alles Heil. Sie hatten keine Hoffnung und waren ohne Gott in der Welt. Wie könnte das Elend der Heiden in ihrem früheren Zustande drastischer beschrieben werden? In dieser armen, elenden, eitlen, vergänglichen Welt keinen Halt an Gott, dem wahren, lebendigen Gott, haben, keine Hoffnung auf Errettung aus diesem Elend, keine Hoffnung auf ein besseres Leben und Dasein, welch flüchtiges Geschick! Die Götter der Heiden waren ja Gözen, und ihre Hoffnung war ohne Grund und Gewissheit; ihr Gottesdienst war Teufelsdienst, 1 Kor. 10, 20; ihre Hoffnung war Lug und Trug. So waren die Heiden praktisch ohne Gott und ohne Hoffnung in der Welt. Ein tieferes Elend gibt es nicht.

In solch beklagenswertem Elend befindet sich jeder Ungläubige. Dies Elend war auch unser Los von Natur. Es mögen zwischen Christen und Unchristen allerlei äußerliche Unterschiede bestehen, Unterschiede in bezug auf weltliche Stellung, Erziehung, Besitztum usw. Aber diese Unterschiede kommen nicht in Betracht. Die Ungläubigen, da sie sich nicht im Glauben auf Christum gründen, sind abgeschnitten von der Heilsgemeinde. Sie haben keinen Anteil an der Freiheit von Sünde, Tod, Hölle und Teufel, die allein in dem von Gott gestifteten Staat, der christlichen Kirche, zu finden ist. Die Ungläubigen sind in Tat und Wahrheit von Gott los und aller Hoffnung bar. Mögen sie noch so „religiös“ sein und zu verschiedenen Lügen gehören, sie haben nicht den Gott des Heils, den wahren, dreieinigen Gott. Mögen sie auch meinen, durch ein äußerlich rechtschaffenes Leben sich den Himmel verdienen zu

können, sie sind ohne Hoffnung; denn ihre Hoffnung ist ein falscher Trost, gibt ihnen kein gutes Gewissen und stürzt sie zuletzt ins ewige Verderben. Wie schrecklich!

Ihr Christen, bedenkt, aus welchem Elend ihr errettet seid! Solche Erinnerung ist euch heilsam. Die Ungläubigen sind trotz ihres etwaigen irdischen Glücks die unglückseligsten Menschen, die Gottes Sonne bescheint. Welcher Christ, der das Elend der Unchristen recht ins Auge faßt, wird Gott nicht täglich auf den Knien danken, daß er ihn aus diesem Elend errettet hat! Und welcher Christ würde sich um Geldes oder weltlicher Ehre oder irdischer Freuden willen wieder ins geistliche und ewige Verderben stürzen, zumal wenn er nun zweitens an seinen jetzigen seligen Zustand denkt?

2.

V. 13—18. „Nun aber.“ Seliges „Nun“! Nun, da die Heiden durch den Glauben in Christo sind, sind sie, die weiland ferne von Gottes Reich gewesen, nahe geworden, sind in Gottes Reich eingegangen, dem Volke Gottes eingegliedert, sind Bürger mit den Heiligen und Gottes Hausgenossen geworden. Welche Ehre, welches Glück!

Aber wie ist das gekommen, daß die Heiden Glieder der Heilsgemeinde Gottes wurden? Durch das Blut Christi. Entwiefern durch Christi Blut, das wird weiter ausgeführt in V. 14—18. Christus ist der Friede zwischen Juden und Heiden. Er hat beide zu einem Ganzen vereinigt und verbunden. Das Gesetz mit allen seinen Verordnungen bildete einen Baum um Israel, eine Scheidewand. Und diese Trennung verursachte Feindschaft. Das Gesetz erregte den Widerwillen der Heiden. Sie haschten das Gesetz mit all seinen Sätzen, und um des Gesetzes willen haschten sie auch das Volk Gottes. Diesen Baum hat Christus nun abgebrochen. Indem er sein Fleisch, seinen Leib, in den Tod gab, hat er das Gesetz außer Wirksamkeit gesetzt. Er hat den Fluch des Gesetzes an der Sünder Statt gebüßt und damit das Gesetz in seinen Forderungen außer Kraft und Geltung gesetzt, Röm. 7, 6. Ist nun aber das Gesetz abgetan, so ist durch Christi Blut, durch sein Kreuz, durch sein Leiden und Sterben, auch der Zwiespalt zwischen Juden und Heiden beseitigt. In dem verklärten und erhöhten Christus sind nun Juden und Heiden zu einem neuen Menschen vereinigt, der einen heiligen christlichen Kirche einverleibt, Eph. 1, 10; Kol. 1, 20, Gottes verhöhnt. Nun haben beide, Heiden und Juden, in dem Heiligen Geist, der in ihnen allen wohnt, Zutritt zu dem Vater. Sie sind Kinder Gottes, können ihm getrost und mit aller Zuversicht ihre Bitten darbringen und seiner Hilfe gewiß sein.

In diesen seligen Zustand sind wir durch das Evangelium des Friedens gebracht worden. Durch das Evangelium kommt Christus selbst, und er bietet Juden und Heiden den Frieden mit Gott, alles Heil an, und damit zieht und lockt er die entfremdeten Sünderherzen zu sich und zu dem Vater und macht sie zu seligen Gotteskindern. — Seligkeit

des Christenstandes, Freiheit vom Fluch und Zwang des Gesetzes, Versöhnung mit Gott, freier Zutritt zum Thron der Gnade, Bürger im Reiche Gottes: das alles wird hier gepriesen, und darin liegt Warnung vor Abfall und die Ermunterung, im Frieden einander im Glauben zu erbauen und zu stärken durch das Evangelium des Friedens.*)

W. E. S.

Outlines on Free Texts.

PS. 51, 10.

Luke 17, 26—29. We are living in days of lewdness. The world is a noisome pool of impurity. We have all reason to watch and pray, because in this defilement, which is so common, God alone can keep us clean.

WHY SHOULD CHRISTIANS PRAY FOR A CLEAN HEART?

1. *Because impurity is wide-spread;*
2. *Because a clean heart is the creation of God.*

1.

David's eloquent plea for a clean heart and a right spirit rose from his heart and lips after he had learned to his sorrow and shame how easily and how fatally man is prone to fall a prey to impurity. From pure desires to lustful revels of the mind, from pious ejaculations to lewd advances, from holy psalms to ribald songs, has often been but a short step. David, Israel's king and Israel's holy songster, in a dark hour, became a lecherous home-breaker. He ruined Bathsheba and killed Uriah. 2 Sam. 11, 1—5; 12, 9.

David felled by unchastity is a warning to all Christians. Dangers threaten us on all hands.

Marriage is the fortress reared by God Himself against the forces of impurity; but society is working at its destruction. From end to end our country is littered with derelicts who have broken their marriage-vows. Present-day conditions in our divorce courts enable men and women to live in successive and progressive polygamy. This leads to a general brutalization of society. Hundreds of couples make of matrimony a mere engine of their lusts, being childless by choice. They do not live together according to God's precepts, but in the same manner as prostitutes.

The modern dance is fraught with the gravest dangers to morals. Purity is risked at the dance. It is a spur to lust because of the close contact of the sexes, liberties taken which are not allowed anywhere else, scanty dress of the females, bare arms, bare backs, bare

*) Vgl. Stöckhardt's Epheserbrief.

bosoms. Amorous thoughts invited. Why is it considered necessary that the young should not dance except under the surveillance of older people? Why do devotees of the dance declare certain dancing partners unresponsive as a stick of wood? From the dance to the brothel is the ruinous path of tens of thousands of girls. Strumpets have, in most cases, received their first lessons in impurity in the dance-halls.

The stage is a school of crime. Bestial stink, nauseous twaddle, hints at impurity, nameless innuendoes, unsavory quips and jests, and other nasty stuff are perpetrated daily in our theaters. The stage gilds vice. Most plays fairly bristle with amorous intrigue and conjugal infidelity. A theatrical manager has said that "the successful theatrical manager must be allied by sympathy and predilection to the tastes of the universal public"; but that means nothing less than to be allied to some very low, very vulgar, very carnal predilections. Hence, the viler the play, the greater the box office receipts. One theatrical critic says: "The usual theater is a nasty place." Edward Bok said some years ago: "It is lamentably true that there are very few decent plays presented on the stage of to-day." This moral welter is not only found in burlesque houses, but also in so-called first-class theaters, frequented by the smart set. Criticisms of certain would-be first-rank plays read: "The atmosphere of the play is fetid and unwholesome." "The play is a conglomeration of honor and of vileness." A certain down-town neighborhood of Chicago in which several first-class theaters are found was called "the segregated district" by a critic.

The costumes of women are notably short. The display of female charms is "daring as well as glaring." The women of China dress to conceal form; the American women, to reveal form. The so-called higher classes set the pace, and the poor ape the rich.

Impurity meets our gaze as we walk the streets. The sign boards, the conspicuous bill boards in front of the theaters, on the walls and fences, defaced with smutty words and lewd pictures, the exhibition of nameless wearing-apparel in the show-windows, sometimes also presented worn by living models, wearing masks to hide their identity, the display of unmentionable articles in the drug store windows—all these things outrage public decency and invite immoral thoughts. The scarlet woman, the painted drab, walking the streets, invites you by her lewd leer to commit those hideous sins which are done in secret and which we do not like to mention.

Impurity breaks into our homes. The newspapers and magazines with their pictures of undraped women, actresses, and bathing beauties and their slimy and salacious stories about three-cornered affairs; calendars with similar presentations of practically nude women; cheap statuary of female deities of heathen Rome; pictures

from the art stores; popular songs of questionable contents coming over the radio or sold as cheap sheet music; records for the graphophone — by all this impurity seeks entrance into your homes, and by these even your children become familiar with vice and inoculated with the germ of impurity.

Hellish imps of impurity threaten your children daily. Secret, nameless vice practised among the young. Invitations to dances, theaters, and movies. The flapper is worldly-wise in an alarming degree. Judge Benj. B. Lindsey, the founder of juvenile courts, knows what is going on among the young, and he says: "I learned that one could go automobile riding (with boys and without the knowledge of the parents) at fifteen; that one could drink freely when one was eighteen: that love-making could begin at any time. Kissing, petting, and other tentative excursions into sex experience, provided they were not too pronounced, were taken for granted by this sweet-faced girl (coming from one of the best families) as part of what she might properly look forward to long before she should be eighteen — if she could manage not to get found out. Such was her code, and such was the code of her friends and intimates." This case, he says, is one of many hundred like it. He states that high school pupils discuss among themselves whether promiscuity in sex matters is right or wrong; whether something could not be said for trial marriages and experimental *liaisons*; whether it would not be better for a man and woman to live together, even though unmarried, as long as they love one another, than to live together, although married, when they do not love one another.

These sins are punished. Heb. 13, 4. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Gal. 6, 7. The jealous God does not suffer man to break His Sixth Commandment with impunity. David was punished. If a man escapes His righteous punishment in this world, he surely will not escape it, if unrepentant, in yonder world. But these sins of impurity exact a fearful toll already in this world. The authorities say that syphilis is the cause of two out of every thirteen deaths in the United States; that one out of every forty persons in our country is annually treated for venereal diseases; that sixty per cent. of young men become infected with these diseases. These assassins play no favorites. The little white coffin, the sightless babe, crippled offspring, asylums for idiots and for the insane, congenital debility of men, childless women with an unsatisfied mother-longing tugging at their heart-strings, operations shortly after the joyful wedding-day enlisting hundreds of women among invalids for the rest of their lives — these, all these, are among the exacting toll of these noisome diseases.

Dear Christians, considering the prevalence of this pestilence of impurity, considering the fateful outgrowths of it, have you not all

reason to pray every day as David prayed? Remember also that your prayer is absolutely necessary because God alone can save you from this defilement by giving you a clean heart.

2.

David's prayer for a clean heart after his heart-breaking experience is a frank confession of his utter inability to battle with impurity without the help of God. He must cleanse our heart and keep it clean, and He must give our spirit the right direction. Ps. 51, 7.

The way of the ascetics, who torture their bodies, of the hermits, who live in seclusion, of the Stoics with their outward prescriptions, "Touch not, taste not, handle not," will not produce purity of heart. Even in seclusion lustful desires will haunt them. Outward purity does not guarantee inward purity. These exercises produce the fatal outgrowths of spiritual pride and self-righteousness.

The heart of man is, by nature, totally depraved. Titus 1, 15; Jer. 17, 9; Matt. 15, 19. But God demands not only clean hands and clean lips, He demands a clean heart. Jer. 4, 14; Is. 1, 16; Jas. 4, 8. Man is unable to purge his heart because by nature he is dead in trespasses and sins.

God alone can change man's heart. Text. Is. 1, 25; 4, 4; Ezek. 11, 19; 36, 26. He cleanses it from sin. 1 John 1, 7; Is. 1, 18; 1 Cor. 6, 11; Eph. 5, 25—27. He creates faith in our hearts and thus purifies them. Acts 15, 9. If we cling to Christ by faith, we must needs remain clean. The Gospel of Christ is our only hope.

In this faith the Christian will flee and avoid all opportunities for unchasteness and lead a life in the fear of God, in prayer, in industry, in sobriety. The crucified Redeemer before His eyes day by day will keep his heart clean. The thought that his body is a temple of God by faith in Christ will prompt him to keep that temple clean. He will be as strong as Joseph, repelling the lewd advances of Potiphar's sluttish wife.

Impurity exacts a fearful toll, but purity is blessed. Matt. 5, 8. What a prize to covet! Watch and pray. O. C. A. B.

EPH. 5, 21—33.

Rejection of God's Word is to-day well-nigh universal. This accounts for the prevalent *unbelief* and *unholiness* as well as for the *confusion* and *disintegration* which we find everywhere. The state is suffering because of the shameful disobedience toward those fundamental laws upon which God has based the welfare of society. The churches are perishing because God's Word is scarce in them. The schools are rearing a generation which is both immoral and atheistic. The homes are full of pollution because God's Word is set aside,

e. g., infanticide, adultery, divorce. Yet the welfare of Church, State, and school depend upon the sanctity of the home. Destroy the Christian home, and everything else will fall. The imperative need to-day is the Christian home.

The Christian home is possible only when husband and wife believe, honor, respect, and submit to, God's Word. The duties of both are clearly explained in the Bible. In our text the apostle summarizes them in a beautiful way, showing in particular what God expects of the Christian wife. This is a subject worthy of careful study! The trend of our age: reason and convention rather than God's Word. The perils and temptations of the present age.—Let Christian wives heed God's Word. We shall consider:—

THE CHRISTIAN WIFE.

1. *Her position;* 2. *Her duties;* 3. *Her privileges;* 4. *Her rewards.*

1.

A. *Her position.* Text, v. 22: "Wives, submit yourselves." The position of the Christian wife is neither that of a *ruler* nor that of a *slave*. God has assigned to her a distinct place, which best serves the purposes which God had in view when He created Eve and gave her into marriage. 1) The submission which Paul demands in our text is that which God has demanded from the beginning. Gen. 2, 18: "an help meet for him." Gen. 3, 16 (after the Fall): "Thy desire shall be to thy husband," etc. 2) A *willing* submission, flowing from true faith. V. 22: "as unto the Lord." Meaning: As they are submissive to Christ, so they should be to their husbands. Submissiveness is rendered to the husband under the eye of Christ and so is rendered to Christ Himself. Col. 3, 18: "As it is fit in the Lord." 3) A submission *in love*, acknowledging him as the head whom God has given her for a *husband*. V. 22: "unto your own husbands." "Your own": "husbands who as such are peculiarly and exclusively theirs." 4) A submission redounding to the good of the wife. V. 23: "Even as Christ is the Head of the Church; and He is the *Savior* of the body." She receives *protection, standing, deference, honor.* "There is no greater privilege in the world than to be the Christian wife of a Christian husband." 5) A submission which all Christians should render one to another. V. 21: "Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God," that is, yielding cheerful obedience to proper authority out of reverence to God, who established it. The submission of the wife is only a special application of the general rule of God. V. 24. Not too much is asked of her. Note: "*in everything,*" *i. e.*, pertaining to the husband's rightful authority. Exception: Acts 5, 29. 6) A submission which is in accord with her privilege as a *Christian*. Vv. 25—28. Being a submissive wife, she

serves the *Lord*, who has redeemed, saved, and sanctified her. 7) A submission which enables her to do that which God expects of her. V. 31: "They two shall be one flesh," a union which under the blessing of God, results in *children*. Her *first* duty! Gen. 1, 28: "Be fruitful and multiply." — Ruling within her domain. Gen. 1, 28: "Replenish," "subdue," "have dominion." Training of children. "The mother the queen of the home." — Testifying of Christ. 1 Pet. 3, 1—6. In short, the submission of a Christian wife is her highest exaltation — by God, by her husband, by all Christians. 1 Cor. 11, 7.

B. a) How different is this position from the position of 1) the wife in heathen and Mohammedan countries, 2) of those who discard God's Word. b) How blessed it is! Cp. Luther's wife; also the noble wives of Christian missionaries, etc. They rightly enjoy the respect of all people. c) How easy is this submission when both wife and husband are Christians!

2.

A. *Her duties.* a) *Willing submission.* V. 22: "as unto the Lord." b) *Willing obedience.* V. 24: "So let the wives be," etc. c) *Children.* V. 31: "Two shall be one flesh." d) *Christian conduct in all things.* V. 24: "in everything." 1 Pet. 3, 1—6; Prov. 31, 10—31. e) *Serving Christ.* Vv. 23—32. The union of Christ and the Church, which is symbolized by marriage, is to be kept in mind continually by both husband and wife, and their lives are to be consecrated to Christ, their Lord and Head.

B. Alas, how few there are who observe this! We need Christian homes, where both husband and wife honor Christ and submit to His Word. Blessed the home where Christ rules, and where the wife submits herself to her husband as unto the Lord, while the husband cherishes her in true love.

3.

A. *Her privileges.* a) The foremost privilege of the wife is the love of her husband. V. 25: "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church and gave Himself for it." 1) Love involves respect and honor. 1 Pet. 3, 7. A Christian husband who loves his wife *dwells with her according to knowledge*, gives *honor unto her* as unto the weaker vessel, and esteems her *as his coheir* of the grace of life. (Enlarge.) 2) Love involves help. It is the privilege of the wife to have her husband bear the burdens of life with her and to have him lighten them wherever he can. Gal. 6, 2. 3) Love involves the duty, on the part of the husband, of seeking the well-being and happiness of his wife. Col. 3, 19: "Be not bitter against them." 4) Love involves the duty of the husband of seeking his wife's spiritual welfare. 1 Cor. 14, 35: "Let them ask their husbands at home." Col. 3, 19: "As being heirs together of the grace of life."

5) Love involves the duty of prayer. Col. 3, 19: "That your prayers be not hindered." b) The love due to the wife is sincere, full, and enduring. A husband should "so love his wife even as himself." Vv. 28—30. 33. (Enlarge and apply thoughts.) Matt. 7, 12.

B. a) How great are the privileges of the Christian wife! Her station in life is one of honor and esteem. b) These privileges she will enjoy fully only if she herself is a true Christian. V. 33b.

4.

A. *Her rewards.* a) Temporal: 1) The love of her husband. Vv. 28—31. 2) The affection and esteem of her children. 3) The truest happiness on earth—the happiness of a happy, Christian home. b) Spiritual: The happiness of a true child of God walking in the ways of the Lord will be hers. Ps. 1; Ps. 128. c) Eternal happiness: 1 Tim. 2, 15: "She shall be saved in child-bearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety." Having done the will of God as a true, believing child of God, she shall receive the reward of grace. Matt. 25, 21.

B. a) Blessings upon the pious Christian wives! Their names are precious in God's sight: Sarah, Rebekah, Anna. Their position is one of honor and dignity; their duties are such as involve the highest service of God; their privileges are inestimable, and their reward is eternal. The most exalted place a Christian woman can occupy is that of a Christian wife and mother. b) Let Christian wives bear in mind that true happiness in this life and the life to come is theirs only if in true faith they remain obedient to God's Word.

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LUKE 16, 10—12.

When we speak of the Christian view of ownership, we do not admit that there are other views just as good, but we emphasize that it is the only correct attitude to which we must conform our thinking and doing, since God, the Owner of all, has taught the world how we are to regard the things that He has given us. In our daily buying and selling, often with men whose eyes have been dimmed with the glitter of greedy gold, we are exposed to the danger of conforming to false standards. As God's stewards we are bound to follow His instructions.

THE CHRISTIAN VIEW OF OWNERSHIP.

1. *How ownership is to be acquired;*
2. *How ownership is to be exercised.*

1.

a. There are two kinds of possessions spoken of in the text which are intimately interwoven with each other: "that which is least" (mammon, v. 9) and "much" (eternal habitations); "unrighteous mammon" and the "true riches"; "that which is another man's" and "that which is your own."

Let us remind ourselves that we Christians have most precious possessions in our spiritual gifts, "much," "true riches," "that which is your own"; *e.g.*, the grace of God; the merits of Christ; faith that abounds in all manner of virtues and works; peace, joy, hope; "an inheritance . . . reserved in heaven for you," 1 Pet. 1, 4. These possessions are truly and eternally "your own."

Then there are those possessions which are very important indeed and yet called "least." These are our earthly, temporal goods, money and everything that money represents, such as food, drink, etc., property and business, deposits and investments. The ownership of these things God has vested in you. He stands guard over them, telling every one else, "Hands off!" "Thou shalt not steal!"

b. But then, how do we come into possession of these things we call our own? How is ownership acquired?

God is the real and only Owner of all temporal blessings. Text, v. 12a: "That which is another man's." "The earth is the Lord's," etc., Ps. 24, 1; the sun and moon and the stars; mountains and rivers; precious gems and minerals; the air you breathe and the water you drink; the coat on your back and the money in your pocket. "What hast thou that thou hast not received?" 1 Chron. 29, 11—14; Job 41, 11; Ps. 50, 10—12. God, however, distributes certain amounts of His bounties to His children on earth; to some more, to others less. Matt. 25, 14f. (the talents); Luke 19, 11ff. (the pounds); Prov. 22, 2.

We receive and accept these gifts from His bountiful hand, through honest work, Eph. 4, 28; 2 Thess. 3, 12; by purchase and honest trading; by receiving them as gifts or by inheritance. Not by robbery, Luke 10, 30; stealing (Achan, Josh. 7; Gehazi, 2 Kings 5; Prov. 29, 24); false ware or dealing, Hab. 2, 6; 1 Thess. 4, 6; reckless borrowing, Ps. 37, 21; unjust wages, Jer. 22, 13; loafing, 2 Thess. 3, 10. (Catechism, Qu. 59.)

A Christian regards his possessions as gifts of God and confesses: First Article, explanation, and prays: Fourth Petition, explanation. He abhors ill-gotten gain.

2.

Having rightfully acquired possessions, how are we to use them? How is ownership to be exercised?

a. Speaking the words of our text, the Savior has in mind that God is about His work of providence. He upholds all things by the

word of His power. He provides all the children of men with their sustenance, with their comforts and joys. Likewise He is the Giver of all spiritual gifts and blessings, the "true riches," which He wants all men to enjoy. Yet He employs us as the instruments of His power and of His grace, as His stewards, trustees, administrators, to carry out His work of providence and grace.

b. In carrying out this intent of God, we must be faithful in our stewardship and employ all our gifts according to His will and direction. Text. Certainly we should use what we own for our own comfort and enjoyment. 1 Tim. 6, 17: "Who giveth us richly all things to enjoy." Yet, beware of selfishness, greed, and extravagance! Temporal happiness does not depend on the amount of wealth we have. Luke 12, 15; Prov. 13, 7. We should provide for our dependents. 1 Tim. 5, 8. Our daily bread is given us to share with the needy. Help our neighbor to improve and protect his property and business. (Catechism, Qu. 60f.) Above all we should employ all that we have for the most important work on earth — the expansion of the Kingdom of Grace. Matt. 28, 19; 1 Cor. 9, 14.

c. The manner in which we exercise ownership, the way we conduct ourselves as stewards, has most significant, yea, eternal consequences. Text. The use of "mammon" will show whether we are miserable mammon servants or faithful stewards of the richest Lord.

The man who refuses to use his money and goods according to God's will, who does not take it to the exchangers, *i. e.*, who does not give to the poor or support Christ's Church, is called a *wicked and slothful servant*. Selfishness and greed make a man ignoble. Deceitful riches choke the Word in his heart. Some were better when still poor. Trying to gain a world, they lost their soul. Text!

Investments according to the will of the Owner pay real, abiding dividends. The ennobling influence of charitableness. The joy of giving. Giving to the poor, lending to the Lord. "He that winneth souls is wise." "Their works," not their stocks and bonds, "do follow them." Larger gifts in store for those who use the less well. Faithfulness in that which is another man's brings "true riches," "your own."

1 Tim. 6, 17b—19.

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PS. 50, 19—22.

"The Mighty God (*El*), the Almighty God (*Elohim*); Jehovah [the self-existent, eternal Lord and Lawgiver] hath spoken," etc. V. 1. With these awe-inspiring words the Hebrew singer and seer Asaph, King David's fellow-psalmist (2 Chron. 29, 30; Neh. 12, 46), begins his majestic psalm, a masterful portrayal of a particular judgment. God appears to judge His people, vv. 4 and 7, those who have made

a covenant with Him by sacrifice, v. 5, Israel, v. 7, *as to their worship of Him*. The righteous Judge rebukes and corrects: 1) those worshipers whose sacrifices (New Testament Church: religious acts and exercises), though numerous and punctual, are merely formal and perfunctory, vv. 8—13, whereas, because God is a spirit, v. 13, John 4, 24, true religious service consists in: vv. 14, 15 (Ps. 51, 6, but also v. 19); 2) “the wicked”; the religious hypocrite, vv. 16, 17, who, joining in public worship, yet abroad complacently violates the Sixth, Seventh, and Eighth commandments. Vv. 21, 22. True service of God again defined (as for class 1 in v. 14) and “the wicked’s” need of repentance for salvation emphasized. V. 23.

Such are the general contents of Asaph’s first psalm, in which we have the most terrible indictment to be found in the whole range of Scripture of a not uncommon type of religious hypocrite, *i. e.*, the slanderer. Our text describes to us

THE DECEITFUL SLANDERER.

1. *His malicious activity;*
2. *His sad self-deception.*

1.

Note the abundance of near synonyms for this hideous hypocrite: the slanderer, calumniator, traducer, asperser, backbiter, defamer, talebearer; the secret reviler, the malicious gossip, the crafty babbler, scurrilous scandal-monger, the false accuser, vilifying detractor, heartless maligner, malevolent disparager, insidious blackguard, the wily blackmailer, etc., which proves the existence of a numerous tribe and the frequency of the sin. In our text *God Himself* unmasks the secret, malicious, deceitful activity of the slanderer over against his fellow-worshipers.

A. V. 19 a. “Thou givest thy mouth to evil” (*lit.*, thy mouth thou hast let loose for evil or in evil). Matt. 12, 34, 35 b. The evil, hostile thoughts in the slanderer’s heart, Zech. 8, 17, are poured forth by the mouth without restraint, rashly, while God’s Word, which he knows, vv. 16, 17, earnestly warns him to check, bridle, guard his tongue. Jas. 3, 1—10 (*locus classicus*); Ps. 34, 13; Ex. 23, 1.—V. 19 b. “Thy tongue frameth” (*lit.*, knitteth, weaveth, plaiteth) “deceit.” Cunningly, artfully, subtly, the traducer contrives his insinuations, deceitful inventions, twisted and distorted statements, far worse than the plain truth. Ps. 55, 21. Cf. Kipling’s “If . . . the truth you’ve spoken, twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools.” Prov. 25, 28.

B. V. 20 a. “Thou sittest”—leisurely, complacently, unconcerned as to the moral implications. The slanderous talebearer “sits” and does not weary of filling people’s ears with his stories and repeating them; of course, behind the back of his defenseless victim; the craven coward. (*N. B.* those who listen approvingly are just as guilty. Prov. 31, 8, 9; Ex. 23, 1; Lev. 19, 16—18.)

C. V. 20b. "Speakest against" and "slanderest." With deliberate intent and enviously he speaks against his neighbor *to damage him*, Jas. 4, 11; he judges and condemns mercilessly, Luke 6, 37; Ps. 55, 3; Matt. 7, 5.

D. The victims of his activity.—As his ambition, jealousy, or envy requires, he spares no one: "brother," not even his fellow-worshiper, Ps. 55, 12—14; yea, he utterly disregards the tender ties of consanguinity, slandering his "own mother's son," *i. e.*, his brother by whole blood, having not only the same father, but also the same mother. (Cf. also Absalom against David. 2 Sam. 15, 1ff.)

Such is the hypocrisy and malice of the asperser's activity as described by *God Himself*. Vv. 6b. 16. The telling testimony has stood there in the 50th Psalm these three thousand years, the slanderer in each case being *semper idem*. Ought not the slanderer, blushing with shame at his heartless hypocrisy, rise to confess that the evidence submitted against him is infallibly true and at once begin to make amends? But repentance seems doubly difficult for the secret calumniator, for he acts under a terrible self-delusion, which is chiefly responsible for his malicious activity.

2.

While his defenseless victim was absent, the backbiting talebearer forgot a witness, who was present: God. V. 22. Ps. 139. 1—4. Always a fatal fallacy with the sinner.

A. V. 21a. God, being long-suffering, "kept silence." Only those of us who have felt the venomous fangs of a slanderous serpent mercilessly piercing our good name and reputation can appreciate the long-suffering of God toward the slanderer; for we are only too apt to say: Ps. 55, 9a. 15a. — V. 21b. But the slanderer, despising the riches of God's goodness and forbearance and long-suffering, forgetting that the goodness of God should lead him to repentance, Rom. 2, 4, deceives himself into imagining — what a sad delusion! — that God is "altogether such an one as himself" and pursues his evil way for a long time, perhaps even to a hoary old age.

B. V. 21c. But let him beware! God does not connive at this sin. "Our God . . . shall not keep silence." V. 3. He will reprove the slanderer and set the cause before his eyes; for He keeps a record of every slanderous word. Matt. 12, 36. And thinkest thou, O man with the backbiting tongue, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God? Rom. 2, 3. A final day of reckoning is slowly, but surely, approaching. V. 22. Let him who is guilty consider this, lest God "tear him in pieces and there be none to deliver." Cf. Ps. 55, 23.

Such is the fearful punishment awaiting the evil-tongued slanderer; for he has not only sinned against his neighbor, but also against God, who gave the command: "Thou shalt not bear false

witness against thy neighbor." Cf. Prov. 19, 5. 9. Then also the slandered and maligned victim will be adequately vindicated. Ps. 55, 22; Rom. 12, 19.

So serious, dear friend, is the sin of slander. Are you guilty?— Consider Christ, who did no sin, neither was guile (deceit) found in His mouth, who, when he was reviled, reviled not again. 1 Pet. 2, 22. 23 a. He also atoned for this sin by His active and passive obedience. "Wherefore, laying aside," etc. 1 Pet. 2, 1. "Go and sin no more!" "Blessed is the man . . . in whose spirit there is no guile." Ps. 32, 2. Cf. Rev. 14, 5.

Concordia, Mo.

O. W. WISMAR.

Gottesdienstordnung am Karfreitag ohne Predigt.

Gemeindegefang: Nr. 69.

Gebet und Schriftabschnitt.

Gemeindegefang: Nr. 76, 1.

Christi Kreuzigung und Tod.

Achter Abschnitt der Leidensgeschichte: „Da nahmen die Kriegsnechte . . . trug sein Kreuz.“

Gemeindegefang: Nr. 73, 1.

Leidensgeschichte (Abschn. 8): „Und indem . . . Jesu nachtrüge.“

Gemeindegefang: Nr. 76, 6.

Leidensgeschichte: „Es folgten ihm . . . am dürren werden?“

Gemeindegefang: Nr. 80, 11.

Leidensgeschichte: „Es wurden aber . . . nicht trinken.“

Gemeindegefang: Nr. 82, 8.

Leidensgeschichte: „Und sie kreuzigten“ bis Abschnitt 9: „habe ich geschrieben“.

Gemeindegefang: Nr. 59, 3.

Leidensgeschichte: „Die Kriegsnechte . . . hilf dir selber.“

Gemeindegefang: Nr. 79, 4.

Leidensgeschichte: „Aber der Übeltäter einer . . . im Paradiese sein.“

Gemeindegefang: Nr. 222, 1.

Leidensgeschichte: „Es stand aber bei dem Kreuz . . . nahm sie der Jünger zu sich.“

Gemeindegefang: Nr. 254, 6.

Leidensgeschichte (Abschn. 10): „Und da es um die sechste Stunde . . . ihn herabnehme!“

Gemeindegefang: Nr. 78, 9.

Leidensgeschichte: „Da nun Jesus . . . gab seinen Geist auf.“

Gemeindegefang: Nr. 85, 9.

Leidensgeschichte: „Und siehe da . . . wandten wieder um.“

Gemeindegesang: Nr. 78, 10.

Leidensgeschichte (Abschn. 11): „Es standen aber alle . . . gen Jerusalem gegangen waren.“

Gemeindegesang: Nr. 84, 6.

Leidensgeschichte: „Die Juden aber . . . ging Blut und Wasser heraus.“

Gemeindegesang: Nr. 72, 2.

Leidensgeschichte: „Und der das gesehen hat . . . in welchen sie gestochen haben.“

Gemeindegesang: Nr. 73, 4.

Leidensgeschichte (Abschn. 12): „Danach am Abend . . . die Juden pflegten zu begraben.“

Gemeindegesang: Nr. 82, 15, 16.

Leidensgeschichte: „Es war aber an der Stätte . . . und gingen davon.“

Gemeindegesang: Nr. 93, 1—3.

Leidensgeschichte: „Es war aber allda Maria . . . stille nach dem Gesetz.“

Gemeindegesang: Nr. 85, 10.

Leidensgeschichte: „Des andern Tages . . . versiegelten den Stein.“

Gemeindegesang: Nr. 84, 4, 9.

Antiphone: In deine Hände befehle ich meinen Geist. Du hast mich erlöst, Herr, du getreuer Gott.

Gebet und Segen.

Schlusvers: Nr. 73, 5.

S. Schlerf †.

(Eingesandt von Th. Höyer.)

Literatur.

Im Verlag des Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo., ist erschienen:
Noonday Sermons. By J. W. Behnken. Price, \$1.00.

It is with joy that I hail the appearance of this little book containing twenty short addresses. Pastor Behnken is undoubtedly one of the most gifted preachers our Church has been blest with in this generation. His sermons at the St. Louis noonday Lenten services — and it was at these services that the addresses here submitted were delivered — have proved so satisfactory and appealing that he has been invited to return year after year, the present season being the sixth one in which he is one of the speakers. These *Noonday Sermons* are not exclusively Lenten addresses; they are rather designed to set forth the fundamental teachings of the Bible. Every fifth one, however, is distinctively Lenten in character, due to the policy of the Noonday Committee to have one purely Lenten address delivered every week during the period of six weeks in which these special services are conducted. Detailed information on this head is given in the Preface, written by Rev. Alfred Doerffler. The style of Pastor Behnken is worth studying; it is chaste, simple, and yet force-

ful. May these sermons help to awaken and strengthen faith in the Savior as they now go out into the world in cold type, without the engaging delivery with which they were first presented!

Synodalbericht des North Dakota- und Montana-Distrikts der MissouriSynode.

1924. Preis: 15 Cts.

Synodalbericht des Zentral-Illinois-Distrikts der MissouriSynode. 1924. Preis: 34 Cts.

Im erstgenannten Bericht sind nur die Thesen, die den Lehrverhandlungen („Vom freien Willen oder menschlichen Kräften“) zugrunde lagen, abgedruckt. Der zweite bringt zwei schöne Referate, ein englisches über Artikel X der Augustana aus der Feder P. C. A. Weiß' und ein deutsches über Artikel XI dieses Bekennnisses, von Prof. F. Wenger verabsaft. A.

Synodalbericht des Süd-Nebraska-Distrikts der MissouriSynode. 1924. Preis: 25 Cts.

Dieser Bericht ist als Nr. 6 des „Süd-Nebraska-Distriktsboten“ erschienen. Zu bestellen ist er unter der Adresse: „Sued-Nebraska-Distriktsbote,“ Box 474, Seward, Nebr. Er enthält ein wertvolles, inhalstreiches Referat von Prof. J. H. C. Fritz über die Missionsaufgabe der christlichen Kirche. Alles Material ist in deutscher und in englischer Sprache gegeben. A.

Dr. Martin Luther's Small Catechism. Explained by Way of Questions and Answers. By Christopher Drewes. Second Edition. Published by Rud. Volkening, Holland Bldg., St. Louis, Mo. Price, 30 cts.; dozen, \$3.00.

The popularity which this explanation of Luther's Small Catechism enjoys, the five thousand copies of the First Edition having been sold in five months, is well deserved. The language used is the simplest possible, everything abstruse has been avoided, and at the same time the work is comprehensive enough for all ordinary purposes. Two things strike me as particularly worthy of mention—the liberal use of Bible stories and the definitions of difficult words, given either at the end of the section or immediately where the words occur. The book will be found useful where children have to be taught. But likewise pastors who are instructing adults will do well to investigate whether this little work will not serve them admirably. The second edition has not been altered materially and can be used alongside of the first. A.

The Lutheran Student. Published in November, January, March, and May by the Student Welfare Committee of the Missouri Synod. Subscription, 25 cts. a year; single copies, 10 cts.

This little periodical, it is hoped, will help to strengthen the bond of fellowship, consisting in their common faith, which unites the young members of our Church who are studying at non-Lutheran institutions throughout the length and breadth of our land. I wish the undertaking Godspeed. In Rev. A. Haentzschel, of Madison, Wis. (to whom, by the way, all orders for subscriptions, etc., are to be addressed), the new quarterly has a very able editor-in-chief, who can be depended upon to furnish interesting and helpful reading-matter. A.

MISSION SECTION.

The Religious Aspect of Medical Missions.

In the following I purpose to take up for consideration the religious aspect of medical mission-work, which, indeed, is the principal and ultimate aim of all forms of missionary endeavor.

In taking up the religious aspect of medical mission-work, we must needs consider by what right we are justified in going into foreign lands, using up large sums of mission-money in travel, shipping supplies, putting up buildings, and salaried our medical missionary men and women. Is it not enough, have we not done our duty, if we send our evangelistic missionaries, ordained ministers of the Gospel, into *all* the world to preach the Gospel to all creatures?

Dear readers, in heathen lands our ministers and our Church have the same difficulties to contend with as here. We all know how in Christian countries all churches in various ways invite and call the people to come to hear the message of Christ. To my mind it is not enough to "ring the church-bells on Sundays" and then to say, "There our duty ends," as it was put only recently by a gentleman of my acquaintance. "And compel them to come in that My house may be filled," Christ said, Luke 14, 22. But the only way we can "compel" the heathen is *to be permitted to speak to them*. This can be done only by either going to them, as is done through street and village-preaching, or in some way inducing them to come to you. Now, one reason why our Board for Foreign Missions considered the establishment of a medical department of such great importance is *because medical missions furnish an easy way of getting into touch with the people*. This, too, was one of the reasons why our missionaries in India and China pleaded for a medical missionary. It was stated that especially since the World War the heathens show little inclination to listen to those "Europeans" (all foreigners in India are called by that name) who only recently conducted a war of hatred and slander against one another. That such people, in their eyes brutally aggressive, should pose as messengers of love, peace, and good will to the mild and inoffensive Hindu seemed ridiculous to them. They would walk away when the missionary preached to them in the street and let him stand there alone.

If medical missions had no other purpose than to help bring the people to the messengers of the Gospel, our missionaries, in order that they may have an audience to which to deliver their glorious message of salvation, we would be justified in establishing them, although uncharitable people might call them a bait to lure the people of heathen countries and force something on them which they do not want. In India I was told by a medical missionary that they

allow all patients to come into the large hall from early morning on, but that later all exits are closed. At about ten o'clock they begin with their prayer-meeting, using drum and fife. This is not, and should not be, the intention of medical missionary work. No one should be coerced to accept, not even to hear, the message of Christ.

The word *medical* indicates that the first duties a medical missionary is called upon to perform are to help the heathen in his physical distress. In other words, a medical missionary must be a physician. He must be a physician who would rank very high in his home country. He must be able to meet *all* contingencies as they arise out of his own stock of knowledge and experience. He has no recourse to consultants and, in most cases, has not even competent assistants. He must be resourceful and ingenious because of his isolation. He cannot call to his aid many devices and conveniences, such as electrical apparatus, various instruments, and diagnostic measures which one enjoys at home. He must be a man of the people, treating the lowly and poor with the same consideration as the rich. Being in the limelight not only before his clientele, but before other missions and government officials, medical and civil, he must conduct himself in a way bearing the closest scrutiny.

Here a medical missionary's duties would end if in his field of activities he were limited to medical work, thereby indirectly calling the people, gaining their friendship, and thus preparing the way to the heart of the heathen. Such work any physician or any humanitarian could do. In the expression "medical missionary" just as much emphasis should be put on *missionary* as on *medical*. A medical missionary should not only be a Good Samaritan, who brings physical aid to the physically afflicted and then goes his way, but, withal, be a messenger of Christ and His saving Gospel to all heathens whom he meets. To him come the greatest opportunities and with them the greatest responsibilities.

It is inconceivable that any man would go to a foreign mission field who would not consider both functions, the medical and the missionary, of coequal importance. Let us therefore briefly study the attributes of a true medical missionary.

Tres medici, duo athei (given three physicians, two are infidels), is only too true. One reason for this is the fact that the scientific medical man, throughout his training, as well as due to his associations, is taught to take nothing for granted and to accept nothing without scientific proofs. Unfortunately this trend of mind, commendable as it may seem as far as progressive scientific thought is concerned, leads many unripe minds away from all faith directly into crass, hopeless materialism. This state of affairs indubitably represents an element of danger to the young missionary in medical training. That a man can be a great scientist and still be true to his

faith we see, among many others, in von Bergmann and Pasteur. Years ago I had the honor of being invited to dinner by Professor Kocher, one of the founders and fathers of modern surgery. I found him to be a very devout Christian of Herrnhut (Moravian) persuasion.

Skepticism, no matter how slight, or indifferentism, automatically debars a man from taking this office. If a physician in connection with a mission were a skeptic he would have to be a very good simulator to keep his skepticism from the alert eye of the heathen. The Hindus are very devoted to their religion, and they know that many a convert to Christianity not only abandoned the religion of his ancestors, but also his Christian faith and became an atheist. We found this in India especially among medical students in government institutions.

Nor should a medical man who is a devout Christian parade his Christian faith at a time and in cases where he should apply the means of art and science God has given us for aid. His perhaps very sincere remarks are likely to be misconstrued. A medical missionary, though he should be devout and earnest in his evangelistic work, must be whole-heartedly a physician.

On the other hand, a true medical missionary, whose heart and soul are in his work, would not, and could not, stop at merely giving his patients physical aid. He would be urged onward by his faith to tell the people of the first and greatest "medical missionary," Jesus Christ, the Healer of both body and soul. If in our Christian home countries a physician were to begin to preach to his patients, he would soon lose his clientele. People here are not accustomed to having a physician dispense spiritual comfort, and they would not hesitate to tell him so. In India it does not seem at all strange to see a physician, after having duly ministered to the physical wants of the patient, availing himself of the opportunity to tell him of the Great Physician; to show him that the Gospel of the Bible is a Gospel of love; that this love, which had its genesis in Christ, prompts us to look upon all people in the world as our brothers and neighbors, to whom our helping hand must be extended. "Love thy neighbor" is not in the vocabulary of the Hindu; he knows only of self-love and love to be shown relatives. How often did grateful patients, before leaving the hospital, refer to this, to them, extraordinary love of the Christians which prompts them to go far out of their way to help the afflicted.

Speaking of the importance of missionary activity on the part of the medical missionary, I would quote Dr. C. F. Harford, of Livingston College. He says: "I would assert in the most unhesitating manner that the medical missionary must be every inch a missionary. It is the one who can aid the body who will have most

influence on [easier access to — EDITOR] the souls of the patients; and if there is a dissociation between the medical and the spiritual, the primary idea of the medical missionary is gone. We want, then, as medical missionaries, persons of deepest spiritual power. There is no need of an elaborate theological training, nor even must the medical missionary necessarily be a great preacher, but experience in the sacred privilege of soul-winning and the power and knowledge to point clearly the way to everlasting life should be regarded as indispensable."

If time were no object, I would say that a full theological training certainly would be of great advantage. If, however, this full theological course could be had only at the expense of thoroughness in medical training, then it is obvious that thoroughness in medical training is, of course, paramount. To the medical missionary do not fall all the different forms of missionary labor which attach to the evangelistic missionary. It stands to reason that a man who is burdened with the responsibilities inseparably connected with all medical and surgical work and often no efficient assistant, could not at the same time assume all the duties of a pastor and a teacher. The medical missionary should not be expected to overstep the limits of his special sphere. His are such unique and great opportunities for mission-work in his sphere as come to no other branch of missionary endeavor. Moreover, one should even caution the overzealous medical missionary, telling him that he would be performing a disservice to the whole cause if he neglected the rightful claims of his medical work by addressing himself principally to the spiritual aspect of his office.

How long has medical mission work been so sadly neglected! What peculiar, illogical arguments have been advanced against this noble form of Christian missionary endeavor, this beautiful and Christlike practical exhibition of our love to our neighbor! Medical Missions help to free Christianity from the charge that our faith is growing cold because it turns a deaf ear to the suffering of humanity. Medical Missions show the heathen that in our religion is incorporated what he has not in his so strongly Pelagian faith, namely, willingness to heed the command: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

We see, then, that the ministry of medical missions is twofold, and that these two ministries are indissolubly bound up in this missionary enterprise; that it is the purpose of medical missions not only to relieve pain of the body, not only to invite the heathen to come and make him willing to hear the Gospel, but directly to bring Christ to him, and to endeavor to save his soul.

Our Work in Ovari, India.

The following is culled from a lengthy report of Missionary A. J. Lutz:—

Ovari is a large village on the seacoast in the Tinnevelly District of the Madras Presidency of India. It lies about twenty miles from Vadakangulam as the crow flies, but forty miles as my motor-cycle travels on very rough and bumpy roads and a two-mile walk across the "desert," the sands along the seashore. I came across the "desert" this morning between 8.30 and 9.30 A. M. and resolved that, as the hot season has set in, I would for the next three and one half months cross the "desert" before 8.00 A. M. or after 4.00 P. M. I do not relish the idea of crossing it during the night either, at least not when there is no moon, because it is a very lonely stretch. On one occasion a guide led me about for two hours, and I spent as many hours after dismissing him to find my way back to civilization and to my motor-cycle.

Ovari was entirely Roman Catholic until 1918. At this time about 300 of the inhabitants severed their connection with the Catholic Church and were some time later directed to us by some of our Vadakangulam Christians and received into our Mission. In June, 1920, the Lutherans, the bulk of whom occupy the eastern portion of the village and who are in the minority, were criminally assaulted in their own quarters by the Roman Catholics. One Lutheran was killed, and several were badly wounded. Much damage was caused to the houses of the Lutherans, and considerable property of the Lutherans was carried away. All of this, however, though proved in court by the Lutherans, did not save two Lutheran leaders from receiving a jail sentence, while the Roman Catholics left the courtroom unpunished. The Roman Catholic Church in South India is very strong. There are none besides us to wield the Sword of the Spirit against them. This is the only means which God has given us for this purpose, and He will grant the victory.

The break with Rome on the part of those members of our Mission in Ovari was brought about by something that occurred in 1918. A large church had been under construction for years and was nearing completion. The roof remained to be put on, when the man engaged for this work turned Lutheran. Others completed the work after the man, who was from Vadakangulam, had been dismissed. An hour before the time set for the first Mass to be read, the roof collapsed. The priest wanted to collect for the reconstruction, but the present Lutherans refused to contribute unless the Vadakan-gulam Lutherans were engaged to do the work, at which the white priest became incensed and incited fanatical men on his side to such action as they deemed necessary to bring the recalcitrants to their

senses. The result was a riot in which many of those who would not obey the priest were wounded and some even killed. The aforesigned three hundred then definitely left the church, though it must be added that they had had such a step in mind for various reasons before this.

The Roman Catholics have made many and varied attempts besides that mentioned above to get the Ovari Lutherans back into the Roman Catholic fold. In several other places a considerable number of members of the Roman Catholic Church have joined a congregation of one or the other Protestant denomination in recent years. Evidently, partly at least, in the hope of preventing future losses of this sort and regaining present losses, the white priests have been replaced to a great extent by native priests, and even the vicar, the vicar-general, and the bishop of these parts are now natives. A grand effort is to be made by them to regain those whom they have lost, and those in particular whom they have lost to the Lutheran Church.

This effort is to begin in Ovari on the occasion of the Festival of St. Anthony. The proper time for the festival is in June, but in Ovari it takes place in February, because in June those who are desired as visitors are busy climbing palmyra-trees for the palmyra juice, from which a highly intoxicating liquor is made, and because in June the fishermen are idle. The church would have little income in June. The festival lasts from Tuesday of one week until the second Sunday after that Tuesday. There is a great outward show, but no preaching of God's Word. Processions take place; the cross and images of Mary, Anthony, Sebastian, and others, profusely decorated, are carried about the village, especially on the last three days of the festival. People from Tuticorin, Nagercoil, Trivandrum, and other places, near and far, attend the Ovari festival year after year. Trivandrum is seventy miles from Ovari. I am writing these notes at the scene of the festival; it has just begun and will reach its climax next Sunday. People are gradually arriving. By Friday thousands will have assembled.

The presence of one or more of the new high officials of the Roman Church has been announced for the last three days of the festival, from Friday to Sunday. That is about as much as they will say officially. But much unofficial information is making the rounds, which the priest, though fully aware of it, does not deny. It is this: These high officials are coming for the purpose of bringing about a "reconciliation" of the Lutherans with the Catholics. The Lutherans are to be offered some privileges, and the debts incurred by them through their troubles with the Catholics in the past seven years are to be paid for them. If kindness will not move them, a boycott is to be instituted against them. If such a boycott is carried out successfully by the Roman Catholics, on whose kindness commercially our

Lutherans are dependent, they will have to choose between the Roman Church and starvation, unless we shall help them for a time. But in recent years the Roman Church seems to have lost its power over the people to a great extent. I personally do not think at present that the boycott can be carried out successfully. The Lutherans, however, are in great fear. We shall do what we can by God's grace to strengthen their faith. Some seem to be wavering. May Christ, who has shed His blood for them, preserve them in the true faith through His Spirit in the Word, which Gregory and I intend to preach daily beginning with to-morrow, February 10, until next Sunday, the 17th [1924].

The lack of a house for the missionary is a great hindrance for our work in Ovari. No one, I am sure, expects a missionary to put up with buildings in which he will have to wear his sun hat all day, or to sleep under palmyra-trees, which throw little shade, or to work in places infested with vermin of all kinds, bugs in particular. As it is, I am usually greeted by my good wife upon my return from Ovari with the words, "How many bugs have you brought?" So regularly have I carried these creatures into the house that she no longer asks, "Have you brought any?" but simply assumes that I did, and out into the sun go towel and quilt and sheets and clothing, in fact, everything that may harbor those dreadful things. The quilt mentioned just now, by the way, is not used as a cover, but as a mattress, often placed on two benches set side by side. A hard bed, I admit, but bearable when one has become accustomed to it. As soon as the Mission has a house in Ovari for the missionary, he may furnish it with certain conveniences, such as bed, chairs, table, lamp, chinaware, kitchen utensils, also a few books, and other things. And then, too, my family may accompany me occasionally.

Let me tell you another persecution story. Koddaikarungulam is about twelve miles from Vadakangulam, which is reached by a road that is hardly negotiable with a motor-cycle. This road is not traversable in the rainy season, even by bandy, and repair work would have to be repeated after every rainy season. The distance by the better road is about twenty-five miles. Koddaikarungulam was a purely heathen village until the end of 1922. It is inhabited by people of various castes. In the beginnng of 1923 nearly twenty families of the Pariahs, the lowest caste, applied to us for a school and for instruction in God's Word. A catechist was placed in the village, a school was opened, and a catechumen class was begun. Within a short time the high-caste people arose against all the Pariahs in the village except two, who had sided with the high-caste people. There are two causes for this enmity. One cause is the resolution of the Pariahs as a community in the village to refuse in future to remove dead animals for the high-caste people and to per-

form certain other services for them which they had been wont to do. The reason given by the Pariahs for their action is the conviction of the high-caste people that the nature of these services is so debasing to those who perform them that only the Pariahs can be expected to do them. The Pariahs, therefore, refuse to do this work even for remuneration, a course that seems perfectly proper under these conditions. On account of this the enmity of the caste people in Koddaikarungulam is directed against nearly all the Pariahs at that place. But what in the eyes of the caste people is the cause of this "impertinent and rebellious spirit of the Pariahs"? Christianity! Hence their enmity is directed chiefly against the Christians.

How does this enmity reveal itself? The Pariahs possess no property except their huts and, in some cases, a plow and a pair of oxen. Very often their huts stand on land that belongs to the high-caste people. They are the employees of the high-caste people, who, of course, pay them as little as they possibly can and usually not in money, but in kind. In many other ways they are altogether at the mercy of the high-caste people, who know no mercy. Now what is happening in Koddaikarungulam since the beginning of 1923? While the oxen of the Pariahs are grazing in the public pasture, they are caught and removed to the village pound; the Pariahs have to pay the fine to get their oxen back. Certain pathways have been closed to the Pariahs, and if they are found on them, they are beaten or stoned. Stones have been thrown into the school and the houses. The Pariahs' share of the crops is withheld from them. Terrible threats are uttered against them. Few native government officials, however, though these things have been reported to them, have the backbone, the courage, to do in such cases what their sense of justice, such as it is, demands of them. Besides, there is the bribe!

The latest incident in Koddaikarungulam is the beating and stoning of our Christians by a high-caste man. They were maltreated and injured to such an extent that they had to be sent to the hospital. With the certificate of the doctor in hand one man went to the magistrate in Radhapuram and lodged a complaint against the high-caste man who had assaulted him. The hearing of this complaint is to take place on the nineteenth, if it is not postponed, and I feel that my duty is to be present at the hearing if at all possible. What the outcome will be is, of course, impossible to say. If the members of a Lutheran congregation who are assaulted in their own quarters by a mob of Roman Catholics and suffer many other casualties, one of which proved fatal,—if in such a case the Lutherans receive jail sentences of six to eight months while the mob goes unpunished, can the ignorant, poverty-stricken, despised Pariah be certain of receiving justice? The path of the Indian Christian is not an easy one. Remember them in your prayers!

Do you find it strange that the missionaries whom you have sent to India to preach the Gospel to the heathen have received so many former Roman Catholics into the Mission? Since such a thought has been expressed to me more than once, it will not be out of place to reply to it here. We believe that we are sent out to India to help in the name of our American Christians to build the Church of Christ in India. This is to be done chiefly, of course, by preaching the Gospel to the heathen. We are not to go to Christians of other denominations, as the Salvation Army does, to proselytize among them, though we surely are to witness to the truth whenever and wherever we can. But when Christians sever their connection with their erroristic churches for proper reasons, are we to reject them? This you will not want us to do. Our present work among former Roman Catholics is not, I can assure you, work of our own seeking. If you consider again that the difference between Roman Catholicism and heathenism is very small indeed, at least in India, you will agree that we should not regret having taken in these people, as difficult and discouraging as the work among them is.



Do the Chinese Make Good Christians?

(Adapted from *Missionary Review of the World*, February and April, 1919.)

It has been widely said that the Chinese Christians are the so-called "rice-brand" Christians, who are in the church because the foreign missionary societies supply them with rice during the famine and with medical care during sickness. They are said to be similar to the good-weather Christians in Christ's parable, who, when tribulation and persecution arise because of the Word, are offended and fall away.

By the way, such "rice-brand" Christians are also to be found in old and established churches, in our Church too. They are in the church for what they can get out of it—business, honor, etc.

No doubt there are such hypocrites also among the converts in China. Nevertheless it is true that thousands of Chinese Christians have during times of persecution proven the sincerity of their faith in Christ.

We all remember the Boxer Rebellion in North China, in 1900. A Chinese society was determined to drive out all missionaries from China and to force all Chinese who had accepted Christianity to renounce it.

Did the Chinese Christians, as a rule, deny their Lord and Savior Jesus Christ? Denial was made possible on easy terms. All they had to do was to burn incense sticks before the idols or sign a paper stating

that they had recanted the foreign devil doctrine, or merely draw a cross in the dirt and spit on it. As is always the case, the Christians were begged by heathen friends to renounce the Christian religion, even if only "for a time," and "just to bow before the idols while remaining faithful at heart." Did the Chinese Christians, as a body, deny Christ? In spite of the greatest of temptations most of them remained faithful.

These easy terms of denial remind one of the famous painting depicting a scene which could frequently be seen in the early days of Christianity when the Romans persecuted the Christians. You have very likely seen a print of the painting. In a public square an incense altar is standing. Around the altar an expectant crowd is watching. Just before the altar a Christian maiden is begged by her heathen Roman lover to throw only a little incense on the altar. But notwithstanding his pleading she stands with averted face, refusing to deny Christ and worship the heathen gods.

When, in 1900, the Chinese Christians refused to renounce Christ on easy terms, bodily persecution was resorted to. Some 20,000 Chinese Christians preferred to die at the hands of the boxers rather than deny their Lord. When being put to death by fire or sword or other cruel means, they steadfastly endured the trial. For instance, a missionary tells of one old Christian who was called upon to choose between denying Christ and being immediately plunged into an immense kettle of boiling water. He chose the latter and died a faithful martyr.

You remember that in the Old Testament Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused to fall down and worship the high image of gold which the Chaldean king Nebuchadnezzar had erected. They refused to do so although such refusal was to be punished by their being thrown into a fiery furnace. You also know that Daniel continued his daily prayers though King Darius had prohibited all prayers offered to any one but him, and that for his refusal to worship a creature he was thrown into the lions' den.

Are you not filled with highest regard for the Christians of China who were so steadfast in persecution and whose faithfulness resembled that of the martyrs of old? Yes, are you not ashamed of the weakness of many American Christians who first became negligent in their prayers and watchfulness and then carelessly and needlessly associated with godless people, and when they heard those words of mockery: "You are also one of those Christians, you are also one of that pious kind," they denied their Christianity; indeed, before the unbelievers ever began their ridicule, they were ashamed of their Savior and tried to hide the fact that they were Christians. Tell me, what would you do if you were asked to choose between death and denying Christ? What would you do if you were placed

before a caldron of boiling water and given the option of dying a cruel death or cursing Christ? "Our Father who art in heaven, lead us not into temptation." God "guard and keep us, so that the devil, the world, and our flesh may not deceive us, nor seduce us into disbelief, despair, and other great shame and vice; and though we be assailed by them, that still we may finally overcome and obtain the victory." We, who have not as yet "resisted unto blood striving against sin," let us in every way, by prayer and by giving, assist our China Missions, yes, all our missions in heathen lands; for from every heathen land come reports of the admirable steadfastness of native Christians in the cruel days of persecution.

So much for the persecutions which Chinese Christians suffered and endured with steadfastness in the years of the Boxer uprising. Have conditions changed? The sufferings may have changed in degree, but not in kind. To this day the Chinese Christians who boldly come out and confess Christ must suffer for their faith.

First, there is the persecution which originates in the family. You remember what Christ said: "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth. I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father and the daughter against her mother and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. Matt. 10, 34—36. This saying of Christ is frequently fulfilled also in China.

One day a missionary came to a village and saw a young Christian man crying and limping. He also held his head sidewise and stiff; his face, clawed fiercely by finger-nails, was dripping blood; his eyes were blackened, his fingers swollen; and he later showed the missionary great welts on the shin-bones. All this had been inflicted upon him by his mother, his wife, and his children with sticks and clubs because they felt that the family was disgraced beyond measure, and the spirits of the ancestors outraged, when a member of the family became a Christian.

But there is a persecution that, in extent and sustained intensity, exceeds all the foregoing — the hidden horror of heathenism. It is called by the Christians "burying alive." It refers to the treatment of Christian daughters-in-law in the families of heathen mothers-in-law.

A baby girl, while her parents were yet heathen, was betrothed to a boy of a heathen family. In the course of time her parents become Christians; she is given an opportunity to go to school and grows up, well trained and winsome, with the laudable ambition of making her own home a real Christian home. But her parents dare not break the contract, and she is tied for life to a heathen peasant boor — uneducated, unsympathetic, coarse, and brutal. Until she lifts the heavy veil (cloth) following the marriage ceremony, he

has never seen her. For the Christian bride it is a living death—the steady, relentless pressure, glacier-like, of nagging and contempt. The young wife is supposed to have swallowed a "magic Jesus Doctrine pill," and the only way to get it out of her is to work it out. This the family sets itself to do by heaping drudgery and abuse upon her.

Tell me, of what are you thinking when you hear these things? You are thinking of men and women whom you know, who because of their wives or husbands or other members of the family have forsaken God and His Church. "To have peace in the family," they have ceased going to church or taking an active part in the work of the church.

Then there are numberless tricks and devices resorted to by fellow-villagers to humiliate and torture a Christian neighbor. A Christian is denied the use of the village well, or he is not allowed to grind at a mill shared by several families on his street. A Christian man refuses to burn paper as an act of worship to his ancestors; the consequence is that he is treated with contempt as one who does not love his forefathers. He refuses to burn spirit money for the purpose of supplying the ghosts of the departed with food and clothes for the winter; the result is that he is condemned as a miser. And one morning he awakes to find that a hole has been dug through the mud wall of his yard, and that his donkey has been pulled through it. He knows it is useless to search for it. Doubtless it has been butchered and sold on the market. Often he wakes up in the night to find his wall pulled down,—and no one can well get along without a wall,—or he finds the meager stock of brushwood, so laboriously cut and gathered and carried on his head down the mountain-side, stolen; or his crops have been lugged off, his ox driven away, and his straw burned. He refuses to make a contribution to the expenses of the debasing theater, intimately linked with the temple. When one convert one day refused to do this, his heathen enemies seized him, fettered his hands, hung him up by the arms to beams on the theater platform opposite the village temple, thus making a spectacle of him, and tauntingly said: "You say your God is better than our god within this temple. Now ask your God to make you come down!"

Tell me, of what are you thinking when you hear these things? You are thinking of men and women who for the sake of standing well with the community have forsaken the simplicity which is in Christ and have joined a religion which is offensive to none, because it makes man God and shelves the true God and His way of salvation. Do you not respect these staunch Chinese Christians, and does not the crimson hue of shame rise within you and creep to your face as you remember occasions when you avoided and warded off harm for Christ's sake by denying some teaching or practise of

Scripture? With these confessions rising to our lips, let us cheerfully supply our Synod with funds to bring the Gospel to heathen lands, so that it may continue to prove itself the power of God.

"Jeremiah, the prophet, was put in the stocks that were in the high gate of Benjamin, which was by the house of the Lord." Jer. 20, 2. Jesus said to His followers that the enemies of the Gospel would bring them "unto magistrates and powers." Luke 12, 11. Do you know that these very things are done to Chinese Christians? In a recent number of a missionary journal there are pictures that prove the truth of what the missionary writes. One of these pictures shows a Christian brought before the magistrate to give an answer on account of his faith; in the two other pictures, Christians have been placed in stocks. The stocks in this instance consisted of a frame of heavy timbers with holes in which the heads of the two men were confined.

Chinese officials have shown themselves to be the most powerful and the fiercest enemies of Christianity. Their aim is to make Christianity "die out." When heathen are brought before an official, they are often freed though it is quite evident that they are guilty, while Christians or members of their families are condemned on the slightest pretense or seeming shadow of evidence of guilt. When work is allotted to the inhabitants of a village, the Christians have to do more than their share in working off the road-tax. Robbing a Christian is frequently not considered wrong by an official. Besides fining the Christians heavy sums of money, the magistrate may order his feet bambooed (beaten with a bamboo) for good measure. This procedure is called by the Christians "rubbing in the salt," an allusion to the cruel punishment of bambooing a man and then rubbing salt into the raw and lacerated flesh.

Should the day come when any of us will be haled before the civil court for our faith's sake, let us not only remember that our Savior Himself was condemned by an unrighteous judge, and that he told us in advance that such sufferings would come also upon His followers, but let us also call to our minds the steadfastness of the humble Chinese Christians and with our greater knowledge of God's holy Word show at least an equal courage and faithfulness. Even now let us encourage the Chinese Christians and make their hearts rejoice by doing all we can to spread the Gospel in heathen lands.

The faithfulness of Christians under persecution is a wonderful and effective testimony. It cannot be otherwise. So it is also in China. That the Christians there refused to deny Christ though persecuted in every way, that they continued openly to confess Christ, causes their heathen fellow-citizens to respect both them and the faith they profess.

Officials, though persecuting, are favorably impressed. Li Hung Chang, the famous Chinese statesman, recorded in his diary as a curious fact for which he could not account: "This Christianity makes poor and lowly people bold and unafraid." There have been schoolboys who, when ordered to enter the temple of Confucius and worship his image, refused to obey the magistrate's command. They expected to be bamboozled for their courage. Instead they were presented by the magistrate, whom they had defied, with a silken banner in tribute to their courageous adherence to convictions.

To endure persecution for righteousness' sake and to reward good for evil is, as a principle and as an actual happening, strange to heathenism. And, while the heathen do not understand the reason for the Christian's attitude, they yet respect it. It is said that it was this attitude which during the Boxer uprising caused tormentors to cut out the heart of martyrs in order to look for the secret of martyr courage. This attitude has caused officials to say to Christians, "We know no gods who are worth suffering for," whereupon the Christians replied, "We know One for whom we gladly die!"

In like manner let us also, no matter in what manner the unbelieving world would harm us because of our faith,—and that unbelieving world may be found not only in our community, in general, but also in our own family, let us remain true to our Lord and Savior and to His teachings; this will be a testimony to the unbelievers of the divine truth of the Christian faith, and they will have all the less excuse for their unbelief. Under no circumstances and for no consideration whatever let us deny Christ, lest we lose our own soul and because of such action the name of God be evil spoken of among the unbelievers.

Moreover, having heard of the steadfastness of Chinese Christians, let us pray God to grant them ever more courage to confess their Savior. But we, who are permitted to build the kingdom of Christ under little opposition or persecution, let us in gratitude labor all the more zealously for the spread of the Gospel. Let us search the Scriptures daily in order to become better grounded in them, so that we may stand ever more firmly on the Rock of Ages, Christ Jesus. Enjoying such peaceful times as we do, let us help the humble Christians of China and other lands, where the preaching of the Gospel and the confessing of the Gospel still meet with much and heavy opposition, where mission-work is carried on under many sacrifices and persecution of every kind. Above all, let us pray the Lord Jesus to bless the labors of our missionaries and to prove Himself the exalted Lord, who, having ascended on high, mightily rules heaven and earth for the welfare of His kingdom.

Rogers, Mich.

ERNEST ROSS.